

J. Frenchman

FURTHER THOUGHTS
ON THE
PRESENT STATE OF PUBLIC OPINION;
BEING A CONTINUATION OF
A TIMELY APPEAL
TO THE COMMON SENSE OF THE
PEOPLE OF GREAT BRITAIN IN GENERAL,
AND OF THE
INHABITANTS OF BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
IN PARTICULAR,
ON THE
PRESENT SITUATION OF AFFAIRS.

By J. PENN, Esq.

Te sequor, Angliacæ gentis decus, inque tuis nunc
Fixa pedum pono pressis vestigia signis.

LUCRET.

Men thinking freely will, in particular Instances, think differently. But still, as the greater Part of the Measures which arise in the Course of public Business are related to, or dependent on, some great *leading general Principles in Government*, a Man must be peculiarly unfortunate, in the Choice of his political Company, if he does not agree with them at least nine Times in ten.—BURKE, *Thoughts on the Cause of the present Discontents*.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. HATCHARD, BOOKSELLER TO
HER MAJESTY, NO. 173, PICCADILLY;
BY W. BULMER AND CO. CLEVELAND-ROW, ST. JAMES'S.
1800.

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 PRINTED BY J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.
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BUCKINGHAMSHIRE FREE LIBRARY SOCIETY
 1848

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OF

FURTHER THOUGHTS, &c.

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ERRATA.

- Page 6, line 10, for "be unequal, read "to be unequal."
 — 11, — 7, for "tends," read "tend."
 — 22, — 22, for "go to," read "to go."
 — 33, — 1, for "nove," read "novel."
 — 41, in the quotation at the bottom, for "algit," read "alget."
 — 42, in the note, last line, for "opponent," read "opponents."
 — 44, line 2, for "Frenchman," read "Frenchmen."
 — 65, — 3, for "attractive," read "unattractive."
 — 129, line 24, place the first comma after "either."
 — 150, — 14, for "them," read "it."
 — 153, transfer the full stop from line 6, to the end of the *Italics*, line 7.

FURTHER THOUGHTS, &c.

IN the work I was induced to publish not long ago, by a consideration of the present state of things in this country; I endeavoured to shew in one view, all the most popular political opinions which existed; and I think the reader of it may himself infer them to have emanated from that dangerous *spirit of censure*, which still threatens the subversion of every civil and ecclesiastical establishment of Europe; and which it has been the employment of the French philosophers, during half a century, to kindle and direct. As I had been lately in the habit of observing them, I was no improper person to conjecture how far any doubtful novelties should be ascribed to their machinations. In the Belles Lettres I had often crossed them, declaiming on virtue and nature with an exclusive admiration of imaginary excellence; sometimes in compositions

of literary consequence, and sometimes in shorter orations or dissertations, many of them undertaken with nothing less than an ardour for the discovery of truth, and on subjects proposed by any one, with which they might write on philosophy, to display eloquence, and to dissipate ennui, in trifling with the happiness of the species. The consequence of their irregular industry is too well known to be here described. Science, retailed out as it has been, for so long a time, in small and often adulterated portions, to answer the demands of every one, whatever his moral and intellectual wealth, has become so marketable a commodity, that the habits of mankind have not only by degrees been altered, but grown, through intemperate indulgences, so hostile to social order, and the well-being of individuals, as to demonstrate the propriety of restraining, or regulating, the use of it. In criticising these philosophers, I only address my arguments to those, who are enough Englishmen to agree with me on principal points. Lovers of system, who consider their imaginations as ordinarily the fruit of genuine wisdom; and universal sceptics, who allow no difference in the degrees of

certainty, will equally be indisposed to admit my premises. For I own myself no more inclined to doubt of every thing, than to take every thing for granted; and should the remarks I make seem chiefly pointed against the other extreme, the spirit which will have prompted them, must shew equal disapprobation of this: since nothing is more uncongenial than the indecision which characterises it, with any endeavour, firmly and energetically, to support the system of political measures we approve of.

To persons, then, of a different description from either of these, I shall submit my examination of the subject of censure; or, in effect, my attempt, for the more perfect discrimination of right from wrong, to enforce that wise as well as benevolent precept, "judge not, that ye be not judged." I shall, by this method, having already deduced a general bias from particular opinions, suggest what other particular opinions may, by a contrary process, be deduced from it, which are either in existence or not, and insufficiently guarded against by admonitions. As it is the real or supposed perversion of nature, contemplated relatively to the standard reason has prescribed to it, that calls forth

censure, I shall consider censure in considering its object; which I shall deliver over to it, in counselling it to temper justice with mercy. It will not be the less proper, in the continuation of a work, particularly addressed to the inhabitants of Buckinghamshire, to shew nature accordingly in that point of view, in which it was skilfully exhibited by a great man, who honoured it, in life, by his residence, and who still seems to warn his countrymen, in solemn accents, from his tomb within its precincts, against the dangers from which he rescued them. This, therefore, I shall do; but before I enter upon new observations, I must carefully explain those by the misapprehension of which I may have already suffered.

My opinion, then, on the subject of faith, I shall more clearly express; and I think it may be judged an orthodox one. It was, that salvation being to be expected by none, except through the mercy of God; though faith and works are the two appointed means of obtaining it; an equal stress ought to be laid by all on the mercy of God, on faith, and on works; and not faith almost singly inculcated by writers, with a moral spleen unqualified by candour, where candour is only justice; as

if to deter by insults, and a lofty display of their comparative merits, from involuntary error. Some persons make a liberal exception, after having pronounced the general anathema; but this late favour coming after the mark is set upon them, they are turned from as disgraced by condemnation. I thought therefore it was

“ To vindicate the ways of God to man,”

both to the Jews and Gentiles, when, in my Timely Appeal I in effect suggested, that the most judicious mode of discouraging latitudinarian opinions would be, to inveigh against the wicked and interested propagators of their foolish and unfortunate doctrines, but spare involuntary and deluded unbelievers in them. Such expressions as wicked teachers, used instead of the name of a sect, might not only indicate a spirit of justice and mercy, but of active charity, by the opportunity it gave of consistently lamenting the situation of the sincere sectary; for this is awkward after declaring him an enemy. Empassioned eloquence, directed against the disturbers of society, and argumentative eloquence, employed in setting in array the proofs of Revelation, and enforcing the duties enjoined by Scripture,

would not be circumscribed in their means of persuasion. Voltaire and Rousseau would then deserve reprehension; but how much more would modern teachers, who have seen the consequences of their dogmas; and who have not the talents to render fame an equal advantage to them, or to interest us in making exceptions in their favour. But though a man may command his pen, and his tongue, he cannot command his thoughts; and *may* be so weak in some respects, as be unequal to faith. He may indeed always return to the examination of a question on which the wisest and most numerous part of mankind differ from him, and try the effect of new arguments, and subsequent knowledge. But the presumption of abstaining from this, and the unavoidable necessity of entertaining his opinion, are not the same thing; and ought to be as much distinguished from each other, in speaking of them, as accidental death, and suicide. Thinking persons too, not avowedly engrossed by the pleasures of the world, would perhaps rightly be left to themselves by moralists, as supposed in that pursuit of truth, which is their duty; from the suspicion of their integrity, as well as understanding, and the *conceitedness*, it might betray to mark them out as

proselytes, to be made otherwise than by calmly proposing arguments to the world. The divine, it is certain, cannot too forcibly urge the necessity of caution in exercising our judgment by philosophical speculations; for where judgment is feebler than other mental qualities, it is so prone both to belief and disbelief, that its liberty injures science, as well as religion. Thus he possesses many fair and effectual means of concurring with others to perpetuate the blessings of Christianity; in using none of which he founds the empire of religion upon delusion, and only shews it captivating with the smile of native benignity. For that there can be any thing insincere in the tolerating character of this conduct, is what it is not just to suppose. The heathen philosophers might insincerely condemn the mythology of which they countenanced the belief; but not only may the divine cleave to religion in respecting conscientious error, but the very unbeliever must venerate, as rivalling his own, and perhaps envy, tenets, which have been supported by such victorious arguments in all times. His co-operation with us, therefore, ought as little to be discouraged as hypocritical, by all persons really attached to the present

system of things, who indeed will naturally defend him from aspersions. It being totally abhorrent from the spirit of justice and brotherly love, which is the character of Christianity, that men should look upon each other with an evil eye for the utmost difference of mere opinion, and at the same time inconsistently profess themselves unable to judge of the guilt or innocence of erring persons, as known only to the searcher of hearts, it is perhaps surprising that some of the excellent writers of the present day have not ascertained, how far they deserve to be tolerated, even after the failure of attempts to recover their faith. Uncharitable bigotry does not only produce pain, but dishonesty, in false boasts of faith; and therefore, to guard against both, I cannot see a surer plan, than to have the generality convinced, that it is the growth and prevalence, but not the bare existence of false speculative opinions, which can be put an end to; and that, as there have always been many, in spite of every endeavour, so there will always be some who cannot be converted to the truth. We are unable to say, whether such false opinions may not have been providentially serviceable to mankind, by preventing the abuse of genuine

ones, to which they were secretly opposed ;* but when I suggested, that a degree of good might result from any concealment of our opinions on religion, it was only as far as it checked the spirit of intolerance, by not entitling it to consider silence in regard to them, as a signal for persecution. I was far from wishing, that Christians in general should not contribute to propagate the opinions they held, by acknowledging their faith in them. I did not either suppose, that the sin of disbelief should not be displayed by any one in the unerring language of scripture, however cautiously he might allude to it in his own ; for the original sin renders him imperfect as well as those he condemns, and therefore their actions, if the result of their best judgment, may possibly, on a general principle, be thought as little false and spurious in their nature, as his own. Faith is compared to the root of a tree, and works to the tree itself ; but though it is not commonly to be expected, a tree may vegetate when the root is decayed, and even be esteemed the pride of the garden. I think then the educated

* This reasoning is countenanced, in a pamphlet published within this year or two, by a sensible and loyal clergyman of the church of England.

ought not to declaim on the general inutility of trees without a root, lest the vulgar make a mistake and, undistinguishably, level all. If I am wrong in judging so, I trust it will be conceived that I write sincerely from an opinion, not that we should scruple to avow the utmost nullity of innocence and merit, considered absolutely, but that we should oppose the tyranny of unenlightened and intemperate persons, who distinguish between themselves and others, by denying them, considered relatively.*

I shall also explain the extent of the approbation I expressed of ridicule. During the life of that witty Frenchman, who could employ its arms with the greatest dexterity, his opponent, Warburton, did not act unwisely in inveighing

• It might be well that the divine, whose judgment is so nearly proportionate to his sensibility as to render him an authority, would watch over that amiable platonic warmth of sentiment which through devotion is sometimes involuntary oppressive, and direct it to the best end. It has been said, that it is "the part of wisdom," supposing no motive for good actions were derived from religion, to deviate from the path of virtue. Virtue is not its own reward, and therefore I should confess *it was not the part of interest*; but I think it dangerous to hold, that it is not the part of wisdom. Suppose *A* a virtuous, and *B* a very profligate and

against it; yet even he shewed us how far it was justifiable, and allowed it, as used by Arbuthnot, or after reason had proved its fairness. But now, when its quiver is stored with blunter shafts, I cannot think it ought to be less encouraged. As far as strictures on ridicule, when it aids irreligion and injustice, tends to check vanity by shewing the compositions where it prevails, are not those of the greatest dignity, it deserves our commendation. But even censure, which now threatens the existence of every new, as well as old, establishment, ought not to be condemned (nor have I done it) in a work which fails pointedly to mark the proper exceptions to the rules it lays down. Ridicule,

unprincipled unbeliever; and I ask, what is the difference shewn by this opinion between the characters? It is this; that *A* is a *greater fool* than *B*. However *A*, from principle, will not swerve from his usual line of conduct, on account of your maxim, and you are safe from him. But consider the effect of it on *B*. Will not he be proud to shew his wisdom, at the same time that he indulges his passions, and in consequence indulge them a great deal more? You may therefore oppress *A* with impunity, but you cannot *B*. We should reflect upon the estimate of charity, as a subordinate motive in the Scriptures, and then forbear, *in any way*, to discourage it.

therefore, cannot be prohibited, without rashly sanctioning the prohibition of every mental effort; and if the loss of it be a slight one, it still shews the human character different from what nature intended it, as the human figure is rendered defective by the amputation of its least valuable part. And have the firmest friends of the constitution and church of England always been convinced, that the laws are so incapable of protecting us against the consequences of the passions, that the trivial one of laughter is to be forbidden? On the contrary, I believe, they have judged it more beneficial to moderate, than to extinguish almost any. Of that dramatic composition, which is the vehicle of the ridiculous, it has been said by the critic, "its professed end and purpose, if we allow it to have any reasonable one, is to INSTRUCT."* Ridicule may be intended to assimilate with a vicious gaiety, unprepared to listen to sober reasoning; in the same manner as the "tragic spirit" has been said to do with melancholy sentiments, in order to correct the passions. It is therefore principally respectable for its moral; yet I am so far from thinking it always the employment of a feeble mind, that it

• Hurd on the Provinces of the Drama.

appears to me the natural sport of genius. The widest associations of ideas will generally, though not always, extend to such as are combined by simple fancy ; and accordingly, the best writers have seldom forbore from trying the fertility of their imaginations in the forced images of wit and ridicule. Nor have either of them always appeared in an age destitute of taste and genius.† I do not take the part of ridicule, as thinking it wants encouragement ; for it deserves only to be left to itself, and

† For instance, Homer, the first and greatest epic poet, was the author of the *Margites* ; a work which the fragments of it still remaining, shew to have been probably in style, strictly speaking, burlesque. A few centuries after, when the arts were carried to such a perfection, as to secure unrivalled glory to that age, Aristophanes made the utmost use of his powers ; and though *any share in the death of a Socrates* is not easily to be forgiven, yet, as he ably ridiculed very young ministers, no sooner in power, than plunging their country into a cruel war ; female politicians, who held their meetings in order to rule the state, contrary to law ; sophists who taught their children to disobey, and even to strike, their parents ; tanners, who obtained the government of a country, by flattering the people's prejudices, in the place of those who were in a situation to expect it ; and other vicious or absurd persons, it may be said of the *eleven farces* which still remain of his writing, that even they shew

that too in such a manner as to debar it from doing mischief. I only wish it to be remembered,

the good in proportion to the harm he occasioned, to be possibly *as ten to one*. If we call to mind the earlier times of the Roman republic, we shall find that Plautus, a writer of the same kind, had other ingenious cotemporaries besides Ennius. In the Augustan age, there was no one who left works which still exist, and in which the ridiculous predominates; but it was a style in great request with Cicero and Cæsar, two not only of the ablest, but the purest writers of antiquity. In modern times, we find a Rabelais flourishing at the same period as an Ariosto; and not long afterwards, Berni and Tasso, born within a year of each other; and Cervantes alive with nearly all the greatest poets of Spain, Italy, and England, and dying in the very year that Shakspeare did. The different parts of Hudibras were coming out during the few years in which the first editions of Paradise Lost made their appearance; and at the birth of Scarron only four had elapsed since that of Corneille, the herald of the literary triumphs of Lewis the Fourteenth's reign. It would have been well if, in this century, the virtuous energy and sublimity of Pope and Gray, could not have suffered the impious wit and merriment of Voltaire; but this, unfortunately, was far from the case. I must own, therefore, it seems to me, that not only this style of writing is to be found in an age distinguished for genius, but that, in no eminent work, does it prevail in any other.

that it is in the sanguine spirit of innovation, to alter a manner of acting for the production of good demonstrably flowing from none; and that, in the present case, the temptation to do so is greater, from the dangerous plausibility of the motive. Certainly, to the superficial thinker, ludicrous language may seem incompatible with serious reflection; and the word *reason* may convey an idea of every thing that is good and wise. The combinations of the rarest judgment, or most faithful caution, without lucid order, and the imposing air of scholastic deduction, may appear to him contemptible *ipse dixits*, while a sophistry *in form*, threatening every evil to society, wins ready assent, and enthusiastic applause, from his unwary candour. How little, therefore, must ridicule, which appeals avowedly to the passions, be to his taste; since he not only finds in it neither major, minor, nor consequence; but misses that gravity, from which, in his opinion, virtue and wisdom are almost inseparable! There is no one unacquainted with the argument, that ridicule betrays a doubt of the truth of the opinion it defends, and a dread of bringing it to the test of what is called *fair reason*. But we are, (and Christians in particular ought to consider themselves) not such perfect

beings, as always to decide infallibly on nice points. We have so little right to maintain that the conclusions of our reasoning faculty are unfailing proofs of the truth of a proposition, that the fact is, the philosophical systems of very eminent men have only tended to lead mankind into error. How much light would the world have received from the two volumes of Hume's Essays, had they contained nothing but a series of demonstrations! If, therefore, persons highly capable of establishing the truth of their favourite notions by argument, have manifestly failed, can it be held, that none will be at a loss, in referring to it, for means to instruct and to amend his neighbour? I had rather, I own, be led by him who could argue well, than by him who had a talent for ridicule, if I heard nothing farther of them; for I should *rather* suppose that he had more judgment than the other; but I should be cautious, in general, of trusting to him, if he shewed indignation against ridicule, abstractedly considered, as taking up time in which the merits of the question agitated were discoverable by an easy method; for this is the idea of a reformer. Nor am I the first who has esteemed this strong reliance upon reason, as characteristic of innovation: the resistance made to

modern philosophical theories are a full proof of the contrary. It is possible, therefore, that argument may deceive ; while ridicule may cast an odium on vice, and be itself a sort of hyperbolical argument *ex absurdo*, of no small efficacy. I am not single, either, in thinking that the wit and raillery of one philosopher, have been less dangerous in their consequences, than the plausible appeals to sentiment of another, whose innumerable followers, carrying to an extreme his systematic principles of morality, and querulous language, are spreading ruin through the world as illuminati, or supporters of that sect : however the two philosophers, had they been now living, might have recanted their creed, as the Abbé Raynal did. But I am far from wishing to praise or blame, exclusively, either the disposition to censure or to ridicule, both of which were given for good purposes ; it is only the free indulgence of the most plausible, and confidence in the talent it employs, unassisted by *judgment*, that I object to. I will instance a case in point. Helvetius compares two characters, as we may these dispositions, with a seeming notion, that a single quality is sufficient to constitute a conspicuous character. They are, the man of mere judgment, who preserves himself

from error, and the man of mere imagination and a multitude of ideas, capable of forming plans, and attracting the attention of mankind: a secondary character, naturally found in the greatest abundance, as their champions, among the philosophists whose pen has supported the French during the present war: for another seems not to have occurred to him. I mean, one which united the advantages of both; one distinguished for judgment, conversant about great objects, or executing with safety what it planned with ingenuity. However, then, the man of judgment might be inferior to the man of talents, as Helvetius supposes, yet the man both of judgment and talents, and whose efforts are not imperfect through their mutual disproportion, must be greater than either; and had Helvetius lived to the present time, he would, I am convinced, have inferred the existence of such characters, from the *successful* measures adopted and persevered in by England since the French Revolution.*

Lastly, I have to defend, as orthodox, my assertion, that "philosophy and political economy"

* I should be loth to have this sincere opinion suspected of flattery; but this will not be done by any who has read Marsh's excellent History of the Politics of England.

may, in their progress, enlighten mankind; since I do not mean in relying upon them to consider them as independent of Christianity. It is not always supposed, when any one speaks simply in favour of good works, that he would insinuate they ought not to proceed from faith. Another assertion in my pamphlet reminds its reader, that every thing produced by man is, as in a manufactory, the more perfect, for having had an undivided attention given to its parts; and as the division of labour increases, and obtains more notice in some respects, why may it not in others? The theologian, acknowledging the connection between his science and morals, may yet, generally, make it the whole subject of his contemplation; and the moralist and philosopher, knowing how little theirs is independent of theology, may nevertheless, generally, confine their attention to them. It is consistent enough with the "*influential*" nature of Christianity, that the object of its influence should be contemplated as having existence; and, since "inquiries into the heart are not for man," it would be rather hard to have a momentary attention to its separate nature, always considered in the spirit of infidel morality. As it is impossible for men, in the pre-

sent state of things, not gradually to arrive at the knowledge of principles, which the systematic enemies of philosophy would conceal from them, it is surely better to have so noble a gift as science represented as compatible with religion, and its abuse only hostile to it, while there exist persons prepared for the task, and not wait till some evil-minded individual, without hindrance, effaces the mark set by wisdom upon goodness. To those who see it objectionable, and dwell upon the difference between Christian and every other kind of morality, it may be observed, that the wants of men being the same in every age and country, as far as morality extends to the satisfaction of wants, or exercise of charity, it must be universally the same; and this is all that I contend. They who esteem faith and works as two appointed means of salvation, of equal importance, will readily allow a separate attention to be occasionally given to either; and they who rely upon faith for the production of works, would naturally be supposed desirous that habits they themselves would promote in infancy, should be formed subsequently, favourable to the reception of faith. Is there any thing more indeed in the separate consideration of the *science of sub-*

jection, than the science of government, which has been so deeply, and so boastfully studied? I agree that systems of morality should *perpetually* refer their principles to religion; but it is equally irrational to despise all specific distinctions between the actions of the governed, as between those of their governors. It may be held, that too much *pains* are taken to throw light upon moral and political subjects; but it is the misfortune of the age that it is thought easy to act, where the interests of mankind are concerned, by trusting to single principles, and allowing the popular discussion of them an exemption from every check it might receive from sober reflection. One false corollary drawn from the true difference, to be demonstrated between Christian and every other kind of morality, appears to me the trivial claim allowed to result from conscientious sacrifices to duty. Even gratitude from a society to any of its members for proper conduct, may require the allowance of an important one as a suitable return.

To undervalue those sacrifices, because whatever is good proceeds from a man's heart, is to undervalue character, and good example; and the danger of this has been acknowledged. It has been thought

wrong, even for the gaiety of comedy to represent our actions, taken altogether, as not being the test of our motives. If we wish to give currency to some of those moral precepts, we have of late years imported from Germany, we may persist in publishing such opinions, which tend no less to make dissolute manners, the acknowledged proof of a proper feeling and disposition. In comedy, this must be wrong in a critical point of view; and is in the spirit of farce, from which comedy has seldom wholly steered clear. Farce professes exaggeration, and, therefore, may consistently inculcate a different lesson from what it seems to do, and praise one virtue by appearing to vilify its opposite. Yet had not Moliere given an example of representing the appearance of virtue hypocritical, I do not know that I should have wished an important moral taught by its means. At present, however, it would be but fair for dramatic satire to form a balance; and if not go to round to every specious quality that may disguise a bad disposition, at least to reduce the opposite ones, of such as it has lowered, to their level. For all good habits, and good actions, may be considered as a sort of language, by which the sentiments of individuals, variously endowed, are

explained to the public. Some of them strike, or sooth, or convince; while others are unable to make their meaning understood: they stammer, or pause; and it is desirable, consequently, that they should be supplied by that public which is to judge them, with an advocate. While this is done, there is no great reason to dread our being prejudiced by appearances. As the conversation of every man of the world, turns continually upon the distinctions of things, and as national improvement is now the fashion, I did not think I should be supposed meditating innovation, in recommending the establishment of a scale of merit, which might sharpen the sense of justice through a more perfect acquaintance with its laws, and by economy in the use of censure, render it beneficially effectual. For, like the lamb in the fable, censorious virtue is destined to utter so frequently complaints of danger which does not exist, that it at last falls a victim to the general disbelief it has occasioned, of that which does. Certainly there was no better time to shew the principles of our excellent constitution tolerating the exercise of every talent, and the display of every great and good quality, than when enthusiasts saw no old code of laws, that did

not shackle some one, and were perpetually torturing their imaginations to invent new constitutions, which might leave all at liberty. At such a time I wrote; nor can I think my ideas, therefore, so infantine, as they must have been esteemed by one reviewer.* I acknowledge part of my motive was to encourage, upon old and safe principles, a noble ambition to benefit society; but this is not to project impracticable schemes, nor to entertain extravagant hopes. I sought equally to discourage the wavering liberality, and the unreflecting spirit of adventure, so strangely, yet so constantly, united in these days; and to have never more, but always as much, justice insisted upon, as human nature was capable of. I may fairly then be supposed to have recommended morality to be imperceptibly improved by science, and to have thought at the same time, what Burke asserted on another occasion, that "nothing tends more to the corruption of science, than to suffer it to stagnate;" but I thought the task ought not to be lightly undertaken, and rather left, in the case of any danger, to the very rarest judgment; as also that in proportion to acknowledged judgment, men ought to encour-

* In the Monthly Magazine.

rage in themselves liberty of thought. A society will unite all the benefit of free inquiry with safety, if the whole of it, taken together, though not every individual of it, forbear to make up its mind on a contested point, according to the spirit of the division of labour; for revolutionary writers themselves ought to favour the regulation of science on that principle, however they declaim against plans to perpetuate ignorance and delusion. A less limited cultivation of science, I am of opinion, tends to *generate habits of acquiescence in first thoughts*, as unfavourable to it, as they are to government and religion. I am at a loss for the reason why societies should carry so far the spirit of free inquiry, as to be principled in favour of incessant investigation, when individuals find so much rest and relaxation necessary between the hours of study. In the case of either, the consequence of such injudicious conduct is a species of madness; of which they shew the usual symptom in harping upon their favourite idea.*

* In the following account of madness, the three words printed in italics, may remind the reader of declarations of the rights of man, lamentations over well-treated poverty, and the carmagnot of the day.

“ The senses strongly affected in some one manner, can-

But my very expressions might have shewn the reviewer that I do not, in my Timely Appeal, as he asserts, propose material innovations in our system of laws, and would have rewards in general substituted for punishments: for let any fair man attend to what I said, and then determine. One sentence is the following, which succeeds some general remarks I cautiously hazard: "but I would *not* proceed further, nor venture on such untried experiments as the philosophers of the present day, or even a Beccaria would recommend." Thus I may appear, perhaps, still less inclined to innovation in our laws, than a queen's solicitor general, the judicious Blackstone, who speaks with the respect I do of Beccaria's ideas, but dwells more on them.* In another sentence, I

not quickly change their tenor.—This is the reason of an appearance very frequent in madmen; that they remain whole days and nights, sometimes whole years, in the constant repetition of some *remark*, some *complaint*, or *song*, which having struck powerfully on their disordered imagination, in the beginning of their phrenzy, every repetition reinforces it with new strength, and the hurry of their spirits, unrestrained by the curb of reason, continues it to the end of their lives." *Sublime and Beautiful*.

* Vide Blackstone's Comm. passim.

hint that rewards and punishments are properly united by man *in imitation of the Deity*. I believe were the reviewer and I to be found in a straggling party, beyond the line formed by constitutional Britons, and were the orders of a superior to warn us of the propriety of falling back into the ranks, I cannot be sure I should be earlier, but I should not be later, than he in my obedience.

In explaining the opinions I had before expressed, *tunicâ distantia*, a little varying, from those of some I in general concur with, I have prepared the reader to attend to all I mean to offer to his consideration; and shall therefore immediately proceed to deliver them to him, tried in his presence by the genuine touchstone of Burke's philosophy; whose theory, or rather arrangement (for I am loth to give it a name lately so much disgraced) of phænomena in nature, illustrative of the human mind, as it will inform, so is not likely to injure, society. It may, perhaps, tend to realize the wish of Socrates, that philosophy should become sensibly useful to men of all denominations; and if it should, by the light it throws on nature, I think it ought at least to share its popularity. In proceeding to the particular examination of it, I may be readily believed to

interest myself about it in no slight degree, on account of the man. The millions who are indebted to him for his useful endeavours to preserve legal authority, and who are sensible of their obligations to him, will immediately comprehend this; but I cannot resist the temptation of mentioning a private reason for doing so, and claiming some of that favourable notice, with which he long ago honoured those in the situation of my family in the then British provinces. Though I can say little more than "*vidi Virgilium*," and have but once been really a witness of his convivial talents, I cannot refrain from boasting, that when the party in Pennsylvania, opposed to her proprietors before her arrival at political maturity, was endeavouring, with one eminent person of the age, Dr. Franklin, at their head, to bring about their favourite measure of divesting them of every portion of the honourable care of her, some unbiassed consequent remarks, tolerating proprietary governments, and therefore hostile to the measure, were made by Edmund Burke;* a man whom I do not scruple to pro-

* Vide European Settlements in America; see also Note I, in Appendix.

nounce, in my opinion, the greatest genius born within the present century.*

* I subscribe however both to the more and less flattering parts of an opinion in a character of him, which is, in the words of it, that he was "the most eloquent, if not the greatest orator of his time." His warmth and sensibility were such in the House of Commons, to which many perhaps, inclined to criticise my opinions, will carry their ideas, that sometimes not only his judgment, but, unlike to Cicero and Demosthenes, his taste forsook him. But let us trace him to the scenes of his conversations with Johnson, and there contemplate him furnishing full exercise to his vigorous mind, and filling him with astonishment at the extent and variety of his knowledge, and the versality and magnitude of his talents; so as to prove clearly he considered him the wonder of his age. For, as the accomplished gentleman in a public situation, or the universal orator admired by Cicero, it is confessed he had no rival in his time. But we may go yet further, and observe him in a philosophical treatise (which he wrote, I am well informed, at twenty-nine years of age, not earlier) uniting the eloquence of Pope, with the cautious and original philosophy of Newton. Burke, then, since the author, to use his words, "of a theory not assumed," even should it turn out less serviceable than I suppose to society, may justly be named with Bacon, Boyle, and Newton, as an ornament of the sister kingdoms, of such a nature as has particularly distinguished this country. For Galileo, Herschel, and some others, have

If I thought he had no greater merit than this character supposes, and I simply was giving way to

rather formed exceptions to the character of continental philosophy; though literature has flourished in their countries. His treatise has been considered as marked with the inferiority of a juvenile work, when compared with his later political reflections; but of what authority must it prove them, so estimated by persons versed in the science of government! I however should suppose his talents more philosophical, than political, though supremely formed to shine in politics, where they could receive assistance from philosophy; as in the questions which furnished him the memorable opportunity of enlightening the world by foresight equivalent to a spirit of prophecy. For in such different parts is placed the strength of different minds, that even he could not be infallible. His counsels, indeed, were rather those of an Egeria, than of a Numa. He could, on some great occasion, have revealed the future to benighted mortals with the certainty attributed to the Delphian oracle; but to animate the members of an Amphictyonic council with one desire of withstanding the enemy of national liberty at the hazard of their lives and fortunes, or to enable war, undertaken in so glorious a cause, to

Move by her two main nerves, iron, and gold,
required, not a greater reach of thought, but more than he
had of that character of mind, which, with rare abilities,
renders men conspicuous for self-command in their dealings
with others, during the pursuit of an important object.

perhaps a weak prejudice, I confess, in favour of men, whose excellent talents have rendered them ornaments to society, I should not lay a stress upon this circumstance, though I might not in his instance join in the clamour against one. His life was not barren of occasional instances of error. Before the manifest prevalence of the new opinions, those "swelling ideas of liberty" he justly praises, tempted him, though naturally, into too vehement an opposition to government: and it seemed lamentable to observe not only party-spleen, but party-eloquence, transforming a Raleigh* into a Verres. But if we consider, that he is not solely to be looked upon in the light of a politician; but that, while his character for integrity stood so much higher than that of Bacon, he united the three characters of a fine writer, whose sensibility sometimes predominated over his judgment;

• Who with his prison hours enrich'd the world.

THOMSON.

The example set by him, as a man of learning and talents, imprisoned by his government, and yet enlightening his countrymen, rather than inflaming them against it, by his writings, is deserving of imitation both now and at every other time.

of a sound philosopher, always, as such, upon his guard against his sensibility; and of an orator of the first rank; we may, supposing he instructed us in politics from the closet, apply to him the following character of the great morning-star of science, and think it far from too favourable to him.

—— Hapless in his choice,
 Unfit to stand the civil storm of state,
 And through —— courts,
 With firm, but pliant virtue, forward still
 To urge his way. Him for the studious shade
 Nature design'd, deep, comprehensive, clear;
 Exact and elegant; in one rich soul
 PLATO, THE STAGYRITE, and TULLY join'd.

THOMSON.

It is by no means now the first time that, in speaking of virtue, sublimity and beauty were either referred to as of the same, or of a distinct, nature from it. The beauty of virtue has been long, and even nauseously, expatiated upon by moralists; and professor Kant has, in an essay on the Sublime and Beautiful, considered sublimity as its foundation, and the only one of them allied to *principle*; of which he, not with the prejudices, in

this respect, either of obsolete gallantry, or nove philosophy, supposes the fair sex incapable, in representing sublimity as the character of men, and beauty of women. It is my intention to point out the arguments supplied by Burke's philosophy, to prove that virtue is not necessarily the same as either of these qualities.

She certainly so often reflects the rays of sublimity and beauty, as to disguise her true nature. The poet and the orator, nay, even the gravest moralist, is bound continually to shew her set off by this borrowed though welcome lustre, in order to increase the number of her partizans; as well as to justify the dispensations of the deity. But that there is something more in her than a mere specious appearance, is maintained by Burke, in the following passage. "The general application," he says, "of this quality (beauty) to virtue, has a strong tendency to confound our ideas of things; and it has given rise to an infinite deal of whimsical theory; as the affixing the name of beauty to proportion, congruity, and perfection; as well as to qualities of things yet more remote from our natural ideas of it, and from one another, has tended to confound our ideas of things, and left us no standard, or rule to judge by, that

was not even more fallacious than our own fancies." Indeed I am persuaded he wrote his *Sublime and Beautiful* with the view of establishing an acknowledged distinction between virtue, as contemplated in itself, and as decorated with incidental qualities by the inferior philosophers of the age, whenever I reflect upon the succeeding passage ; which is, " This loose and inaccurate manner of speaking, has therefore misled us both in the theory of taste and morals ; and induced us to remove the science of our duties from their proper basis (our reason, our relations, and our necessities) to rest it upon foundations altogether visionary and unsubstantial." In order thus to effect the due separation of virtue from the sublime and beautiful, he undertook, I think, his work ; and to obtain and communicate clear notions of the former, with this view of advantage to the latter, he, sensible of the nature of complex ideas, set about ascertaining the simple ones which they included. This is a method, if not flattering to the imagination, yet satisfactory to the understanding.

The observations I have quoted will induce me, in the subsequent part of this work, to extend my view over taste as well as morals, and the rather,

as it is acknowledged to have no less suffered from prevailing prejudices. Indeed, taste was the only professed object of the writer of them: yet it is obvious that in every action of our lives, our reason may be warped, and that in an equal degree, by *delight* and *pleasure*, as they are described by him; and that therefore the most sensible benefit derived from his discoveries would be the extension of equal justice to all men; to those, whose claims of virtue are enforced by the sublime and beautiful, the truly necessary reward of genius superadded to that of virtue, and to those whose only offering is virtue, the unfailing equivalent of its intrinsic though not apparent value. Too often this justice is so little attended to, that those who deserve best of the public, are, from ignorance of the nature of their claim, marked out by it, through life, for persecution; after the manner which will be understood by an examination of the process of our principal passions, (as they are esteemed by Burke) sympathy, imitation, and ambition, which their efforts call forth. A man exerting himself ably, with an intention to benefit the community, will be actuated more or less by *sympathy*, but not in such a mode, and to such a de-

gree, as, by sentimental declamation, or a meddling disposition, either to do no good, or to do harm. He will continue to indulge the love of *imitation*, which incessantly operates, and which is favourable to existing establishments and opinions; leaving unbroken that genuine cement, by which it so forcibly connects the undecayed fabric of society, and without which it cannot long have either beauty or utility to invite us, whatever the promises of rash or interested speculators; but he will have *ambition* enough to make existing establishments and opinions productive of unknown good, and to undertake such improvements of society as are obvious and easy in the eye of real ingenuity, by making such new provisions for new wants, as are consistent with the original design which regulated its formation. But foolish or ill-meaning persons will misrepresent and exaggerate good and bad traits of character discovered in the fair operation of these passions, though justice is even due in spite of their abuse. The science allowed the first rank being divinity, there is a propriety that I should select from those eminent in it, any example I might give of the ill reception in the world of those who signalize themselves in literature. The justice due to

unworthy men is less interesting, and I shall barely allude to Abelard, as great in the same science; insinuating that even he, and *a fortiori*, better literati, have deserved common attention. His story is well known. During his youth he was perpetually triumphing over rival professors, and intemperately resenting their envious opposition; and having, when of a middle age, become acquainted with his young pupil, he, by a breach of trust, gave occasion to those letters from her, in which the force of love is so strikingly displayed. He died without leaving works to shew him very far superior to his cotemporaries. But the character I am desirous of instancing as a perfect contrast to him, is a grave and truly dignified prelate, whom I have already mentioned; the author of works replete with the rarest learning, of considerable magnitude, and of the utmost importance. In his laborious and original undertakings, it was no wonder that, being more equal than other divines to the emulous enterprizes of ambition, he should depart somewhat more from the accommodating indulgences of imitation, and give them a pretext to accuse him of a want of urbanity, nay, of Christian patience and resignation. Allowances, however, ought to be made

for writers, or any other men of integrity, absorbed in great designs ; nor will even the cause of urbanity suffer, by sometimes sparing those to whom " the soft green of the mind," as Burke calls it, has been denied by nature. The sprucer theologians, who essayed short flights, in composing books, comparatively proper only to shew their elegant scholarship, were more at liberty, not from the duties of their station (for business generally tends to foster social habits) but from abstraction, caused by abstruse study, and an original pursuit, to cultivate those popular virtues which are valuable, without being the only ones. The singular and solitary situation in which such a pursuit puts a man, renders it his interest, though it be not always the public's, that he should relinquish it as early as he can. His end is discovered by rivals, who are just able to understand him, and whose censure shews they are " content to dwell in decencies," but happen unfortunately " to want a heart." But it is not discovered by all ranks ; and therefore some of the ignorant are encouraged to triumph in their supposed advantage of greater activity, and services towards the public. A living writer of the first merit has, amongst his essays, one on the subject

of *men of business*; "not those," as he observes, "whose whole conduct forms a system of active benevolence;"* but those who "render themselves insignificantly consequential by their public exertions."† But such a one ought not to be encouraged in discrediting a character of claims to consideration, like those of this divine, whom every friend of the church and state will be tempted to praise, though their enemies, for the same reason, revile him. He had the honour of being the first who combated the philosophical arguments of Bolingbroke; against whom he took the field, as at least an equal antagonist. It was his whole desire, and the object of his severe studies during many years, to approve himself serviceable to the cause he sincerely thought a right one, and on the success of which he conceived the happiness of the present and all future generations to depend. Yet the fact was, that he found some so inveterate in their enmity, and others

* I must not omit here the due notice of my able and excellent friend Mr. Thomas Bernard, who, with his coadjutors, has done, and is still doing, much essential service to the country.

† Pye's Sketches, p. 272.

so *delicate** in their friendship, to him, that his faults easily tempted his readers to withhold fame from him immediately, when it might prove an encouragement to literary exertion, and award it condescendingly afterwards, when not only it might find his wishes placed on other things, but might be nauseated as a useless incense to vanity. I know that precedent may be pleaded for what I here consider as a discouragement of talents; and that therefore blame is not at present to be taken for it; but surely the grievance experienced is not the smaller on this account; and if it can be possible, *by degrees*, to facilitate a general comprehension of the nature and value of all patriotic pursuits, it may be more worth while, than to spy, as it were, contemptuously at the truly able, even in the cloyster of theology, as if he were an actor who was to strut unapplauded, and unhonoured, almost till the curtain dropped. The fairness and candour of Warburton, as well as his integrity, may deserve more reward than the mere *allowing* them, as it is called; for the praise itself of integrity, has been long held up to notice

* To those who are ignorant of this allusion there is no occasion to explain it.

as proverbially contemptuous.* But I do not say, that this writer was "praised and ragged;" for, besides singular marks received of private respect, he met with friends in the ministry, insomuch that the great Earl of Chatham was the person, who promoted him to the see of Gloucester, and valued himself upon thus patronizing so tried a friend of church and state. With regard, indeed, to others, with whom he sided, it is said, that "he was hurt at not receiving that return of good will from them, which his life and conscience told him he might expect, and had deserved."† This consideration has sometimes roused the affectionate zeal of his biographer, when he has, in different works, had occasion to defend, or to describe him; and whatever warmth of language he too has then thought necessary, he must be allowed to have shewn a heart capable of friendship. There is, I think (and it has perhaps increased by the issue of the contests I am referring to) a frequent want of plain-dealing, and an inclination to "dwell in decencies," among critics, which draws the attention of authors from the matter, to the manner of publication; and sub-

* *Probitas laudatur et algit.* *Juv.*

† *Life of Warburton, prefixed to his works.*

stitutes an insincere taste for popularity, in the room of a sincere love of the art, or science, they cultivate. But as it is impossible to enjoy perfect simplicity in government, it is better to secure it in morals, and so render a necessary evil always tolerable. The remarks made by the two prelates I have been speaking of, tended to this politic and benevolent end; but a herd of writers, in prose and poetry, then rendered one of them unpopular, and their partizans since, have prolonged the disrepute his opinions derived from his natural disposition; though, according to Bacon (not however to modern philosophers), where there are aspiring men, there may in *some* cases, be “less danger of them, if they be rather harsh of nature, than gracious and popular.”*

Because another man's disposition and opinions do not square with ours, or please us, we ought not, therefore, to refuse the credit and currency due to them. Every man may consider himself as the representative of his own way of thinking in the world; he may properly present its petition there, and promote its interest, till it clash with the interests of truth and justice; but should not imi-

* I would not be thought to refuse justice to the virtues of some of his opponent, especially one very distinguished prelate.

tate the member of parliament, who wrongly prefers his constituents to the nation. From the temperate suggestions of various people differing in opinion, the public derives advantage, as much as it suffers from the uncandid presumption of those who expect to convince without offering argument. That equal justice may be done to all, it may be of service to contemplate the different characters of men under distinct general heads, if there be any, under which they may naturally be distributed; and they, I think, are provided in the qualities shewn to characterize objects of sensation in Burke's treatise. Professor Kant, a fashionable writer, furnishes a precedent for this kind of survey of them, in a philosophical work; and will prevent any idea of singularity attaching to my arrangement of the objects of taste, including them as far as they can be considered such. I have already informed the reader of the general qualities he supposes to distinguish the two sexes; and he also enumerates various tempers and dispositions which he thinks discriminate the characters of the principal nations of Europe. His ideas are ingenious, but I cannot look upon his arrangement, as strongly suggested by nature, and still less as productive of utility.

An Englishman's lot is cast with Englishmen; a Frenchman's with Frenchman, and a Spaniard's with Spaniards; and therefore each is, comparatively, little interested in the character of the other. Nature and utility, on the contrary, have prompted people in conversation not only to refer the two sexes respectively, but individuals of either, and of all countries, to the heads both of the Sublime and Beautiful. This is what I intend to do in the present work, only referring at the same time, other persons in whom they are observable, to the remaining qualities noticed in Burke's admirable Treatise, and in the order in which the whole of them there stand. I shall first then name the quality of

NOVELTY.

A disposition properly inclined to novelty may discover itself by an ardent thirst of knowledge, by originality of conception in works of true merit (which indeed is inseparable from them; for even the faithful minister who adheres ably to old institutions, and the faithful translator of a poem, who has not like him, a scope for the greatest exertions, may shew it); also by acquiescing in national improvements proposed by the wisest and most cau-

tious in a community, in spite of popular prejudice in favour of established customs, however contemptible and unimportant; by our mind being made up to any new measure, not transgressing the rules of prudence, to which our interest prompts us; by our yielding to nature, where we have a stronger propensity than others to change our employments, way of life, or place of abode, provided we act only in strict consistence with justice and propriety; or by exerting a faculty of preventing any society where we are, from ever feeling disgust at a sameness in our manner and conversation. Also, new discoveries in science; an original manner in the fine arts, which nevertheless satisfies the rigid critic and connoisseur; or new expressions, in some sorts of writing, thinly scattered, and keeping purity of style in view, from a like opinion with Horace's, of the *deciduous* nature of words; which may be renewed, like leaves, though only at a proper season. If we reverse the medal, and consider desire hurrying men on with undue rapidity to the gratifications of novelty, we shall remark all the unprofitable labours of extreme scepticism, as well as the evils of habitual discussion; which will not surely be enough noticed, while so many

are agreed, that *every* attempt to seek for truth, necessarily brings us nearer to it. This is a fruitful source of treasons, especially modern ones. We shall remark too, destructive speculations both of a public and private sort; ill-judged, whimsical novelties of conduct, by which we injure ourselves, and are troublesome to our neighbours; or manners intentionally singular, at which it is natural for every one to be disgusted. All the follies of the fine arts, imagined by their professors to impose upon ignorant people, and obtain the character of great originals, are of this species; and even very good poets, painters, and musicians, receive extravagant praise, when so entitled, not only for unjustifiable peculiarities, but for being the first to introduce, however dexterously, into their respective arts, an inferior style, such as, for instance the vulgar abuse of the ancient Fescennine verses.* As in the greatest line of art, Michael Angelo was not an original, *because* he was a mannerist; so the best writer of farce would have ranked higher, had

• What Mr. Anstey has written of a satirical cast, is truly new, both in plan and execution. Gray justly observes of the Bath Guide, that "it is a new and original kind of humour."

he excelled as much in tragedy or comedy. The fair sex are accused by some of having too much *curiosity*; of course too much exciting the ideas of erroneous *novelty*; but though they gave the first, they have not furnished the most dangerous, examples of it since the fall.

I shall next consider

THE SUBLIME.

And I confess I differ from almost all those who have criticised Burke's treatise, in thinking his use of the term *terror*, in referring sublimity to it, not only accurate, but in the highest degree masterly. The ingenious gentleman, who in his *essay on the Picturesque* has thrown much light upon gardening, has also enabled us to conclude, that Burke's system extended beyond the limits it was supposed to have by Gibbon, and took in not only "the sensible qualities of things, heightened by the imagination," but likewise every source of the sublime and beautiful. For Mr. Gilpin, in works in which he has so much distinguished his taste, has rightly observed, (and Burke, closely studied, would be found to agree with him) that love is excited among its objects often "by their moral qualities."

It however does not appear that the *Picturesque*, according to its definition by Mr. Price, is a quality no less distinct from the Sublime, than it is from the Beautiful. He indeed very happily illustrates the difference between either the Sublime or Picturesque, and the Beautiful; but his ingenuity fails to convince us that there is an equal distinction between the Sublime and Picturesque; because they are not *opposite* to one another, as Burke represents the Sublime and Beautiful to be; while on the contrary, both the Sublime and Picturesque, in any sense of the words, are opposite to the Beautiful. The term *Sublime* is used by Burke in an original and generic sense, and the term, in its usual acceptation and the rough, or picturesque, may be names of two species included in the former. If therefore this distinction be made, others also must, with rather unphilosophical consequences, and which Mr. Price would himself disapprove of; for he virtually objects to another, deducible from Dr. Priestley's opinion, that the Sublime is rather described by "an awful stillness," than by terror, in adducing examples very properly to shew that terror is the source of the Sublime. In Burke's arrangement, we fancy him surveying nature with the eye of a

superior being, and unobstructed by any medium that sets bounds to mortal sight, pointing out the essential resemblance of those movements by which she produces a variety of effects. The only way, therefore, it should seem, of classing all these effects, is to adhere to his division of the sublime and beautiful.*

Among the good examples of a disposition productive of ideas tinged with *terror*, are, a resistance of the temptation we are under from sympathy, stimulated by importunity, of letting unworthy objects draw to themselves all the advantages of our generosity and kindness, and defraud society of the help they would afford for the relief of deserving ones; the energy of active virtue, not degenerating into folly, or an inclination to interfere with the concerns of others; a spirit of principled resistance to oppression; an indifference to declamations against war, when we really disapprove of, and have entered into it much against our will; and a preference of the restraints of law, and the provisions of political wisdom, to an implicit confidence, during the present state of the world, in the enlightened philanthropy of nations, as well as

• Vide Note II. Appendix.

individuals; a persevering forwardness in taking fair advantages of circumstances, to promote the interest of our friends, or even of ourselves; animation either of manners or character, carried as far as possible without shocking, or prejudicially influencing the minds of men; one instance of which is the superior vivacity, and fashionable frolics of youth, where free from blame: * also, where the understanding only is responsible, a sufficiency of action in the drama, if there be not too much, and it have the stamp of sense; since it banishes languor, which is of a tone uncongenial with the sublime: lastly, I will mention the glowing language, the *verba ardentia* of lyric poetry; and the style in prose and other kinds of poetry, that borders upon it without transgressing its own bounds.† Examples

* *Sublimis, cupidusque, et amata relinquere pernix.*

HOR.

† All extremes are to be avoided; but the public should be warned against those critics who see in this style “glittering accumulations of ungraceful ornaments;” and who wish exclusively to encourage the plain style adapted to the description of manners, *when that is not the writer’s business*. Every style has its faults and its merits, and will find a rational advocate; while the accused writer will cry,

—After all, what would you have me do,
When out of twenty I can please but two;

of the false, or unmodified sublime, are, harsh and unjust proceedings in deterring from encroachment, and in punishing it; for murder and every kind of violence rank under this head: the fatal consequences of that tedium by which people refuse credit to good government and good conduct, wanting in an irritation of activity which alone interests superficial minds; and such are, aided by a love of

When this heroics only deigns to praise,
 Sharp satire that, and that Pindaric lays?
 One likes the pheasant's wing, and one the leg;
 The vulgar boil, the learned roast, an egg.
 How hard to hit the palate of such guests!

Whatever single line of reading may best teach the critic to judge of some works, he cannot in general better prepare himself by any, than by the greatest productions of human genius, the works of the finest writers of Greece and Italy, and of England, during the last century or two. That respectable poet and Italian teacher, Signor Polidori, is doing a public service, by a plan, patronized in a manner worthy of the undertaking, to facilitate the acquaintance of our youth of both sexes with a language which may be well preferred, at the present moment to those *less elegant ones* which abound with all the modern notions of morality. But there are other recommendations of it. It is the boast of some languages that they have good works written in them; but it is the boast of others, that they have the best.

novelty, and a false notion of fitness, unconstitutional and violent exertions for the extension of political liberty, and the circulation of dangerous opinions: a passion for war, and a seditious or a tyrannical spirit; an interestedness destitute of equity and moderation, which is troublesome and ruinous to our neighbours: a boisterous forwardness of behaviour, which deducts from the enjoyments of society, or obtains by easy importunity the reward withheld from modest merit: lastly, the false sublime, either in dramatic or lyric poetry; the unnatural situations, and almost burlesque pomp, of tragedy; and the turgid numbers which endeavour to panegyryze the subject of the ode.

BEAUTY.

This quality, as it produces the grateful effect diametrically opposite to that of sublimity, has been virtually in a great measure described by what I have observed on that head. It is properly instanced in charity, mildness, liberality, affability, and lowliness of mind; and also in such indulgences as are forbidden us only by superstitious austerity. Wealth, considered not as giving power to the owner, in which case it is allied to the sublime, but

as exciting hopes of largesses in others, produces the effect of beauty. So likewise does poverty, with the *smallness* of its means, the thoughts of *pleasures*, nay, comforts withheld, and the diminutive scale of every thing that surrounds it, together with the particular duties, and the train of ideas concerning them, it summons into the mind. Both of them have a right to justice ; but perhaps there fortunately never was a time when the latter had so many advantages. Beauty is of a false, unmodified kind, in unenlightened generosity ; a pernicious spirit of interested acquiescence, which almost tempts us to honour pride ; an unprincipled indifference to the consequences of luxurious passions, however we see them in our neighbours violating almost every law, human and divine, and wantonly impairing the standard of virtue in the community ; the meaner arts used by demagogues to acquire popularity, and the crimes and evils produced in society by an habitual indulgence in luxurious vice. The affectation of refined sensibility, and dangerous softness of sentiment, that pervade many modern novels too, are in the bad extreme ; especially when they abound with hints and allusions that awaken the passions, and turn the thoughts on

vice. False beauty too is instanced by dulness, as false sublimity, a more animated quality, is by folly; the occasional deference paid to which for destroying silence and sameness in societies, proves the *respect* enforced by the sublime.

FITNESS.

That this quality is distinct from beauty, I shall, after Burke's example, endeavour to shew;* for his arguments have been contested. One in particular I will mention. He asserts that "the snout of a swine," though in all respects *fit*, has nothing in it *beautiful*. Now to judge whether he reasons justly, in giving this opinion, we should consider whether he expresses his idea of the word beautiful; and if he arrives at a conclusion respecting beauty, agreeable to his definition of it, nothing can be advanced against his logic. He observes of beauty, "it is a name I shall apply to all such qualities in things as induce in us a sense of affection and tenderness, or some other passion the most nearly resembling these." But has any man of feeling perceived a swine's snout to produce this effect in in him? Fitness has not necessarily any force. If

* Particularly in Note III. Appendix.

in passing through a wood, during a ramble, we cut a stick to walk with, it is perfectly suited to the purpose we design it for; and yet we do not contemplate it as an object producing pleasure. But we may conclude too, not only that Burke's reasoning on, but his definition of beauty was good. It will be fair to expect that any man of taste should consider the characters which mark respectively the mathematician's and poet's thoughts, as essentially different; and that therefore beauty cannot, any more than sublimity, be the same as fitness.*

As then fitness may be allied to mediocrity, virtue the chief instance of fitness well understood, and which will be *complete* in any one, if he combine faith and works, being openly active in exertions

* Though, however, in the following observations, I proceed to shew virtue perfectly distinct from taste and beauty, the dull panegyrist of mere utility will not find them rejected, as unnecessary, in the consideration of it. Unless capable of estimating their due weight, not so much, I mean, in the fine arts, as in the various pursuits men of all orders are engaged in, he can never be an authority, as a moralist, from want of sympathy. The inflexibility of his feelings never permitting them to come into contact with many parts of nature, they must continue still unperceived by him.

for the service of his fellow creatures, so far, and no farther, than he really thinks his open activity will be more useful than his secret meditations, directed to the same end, and does not conceive that his ability will be more productive, by lying fallow for the present; virtue, I say, necessarily supposes neither sublimity, beauty, nor interest of any kind. The exercise indeed of it, in characters of more or less energy, will and ought, in various degrees, to exhibit them; but examples are not rare of such as do so for the sake of popularity; and where the world is perhaps the worse for the deed, while their motive fails to harmonize with its plausible appearance. When therefore we feel ourselves impelled by attractive qualities in others to shew them kindness, we do rightly in obeying nature; as we manifest a laudable gratitude for pleasure afforded us, encourage genius, and may encourage virtue. But the danger must be obvious of removing, as Burke says, the science of our duties from their proper basis (our reason, our relations, and our necessities),” though Professor Kant, in founding it upon sublimity, is particularly solicitous it should be perceived, that it has nothing to do with those humble materials. He is of opinion that it has nothing to do with

speculative rules. Without impeaching intentions, which have been justified, I cannot approve of his philosophical tenets, in this and other instances. Here, I think, their particular tendency is to encourage an affected greatness of character, as much as the systems of other moralists do an affected benevolence of spirit. For beauty, as well as sublimity, emanates from genuine virtue; and we deserve equal approbation, in being immediately actuated in what we do, by love and charity to our fellow creatures, and by an enthusiasm arising from our reverence of duty, if we only "do to others as we would they should do unto us." It is this admirable precept that keeps men, who desire it, in the right way; since reason is the test of its observance. It is a guide which prevents our wandering imperceptibly, the sport of sentiment, and deceiving the world and ourselves, from virtue to its simple appearance. By coupling two opposite principles, it prevents the Stoic and Epicurean excesses of either; and neither makes it criminal to think of something else besides modern philanthropy, nor authorizes the base selfishness of Mandeville's system. It is certain that many who act from impulse, are as excellent as those who act from reason; but this is

because they really observe the precept, and do what is their duty, what is reasonable, from feeling. But to leave them and others nothing to direct them but sentiment, no rule that has any thing in it precise and determinate, which can distinguish words from things, and present principles from their future corruption, is unsafe, however customary. What is called goodness of heart may be exemplified no less by a resolute adherence to rules founded on utility, than by the exercise of benevolent affections.

This reasoning may not be thought superfluous to guard against the prejudice referred to, and which is encouraged, among others, as favourable to his revolutionary principles, by Helvetius. It was natural for him to put the cases of two persons, one of whom should be without blame, and the other with a much stronger desire of doing good, be so influenced by the passion of love, as to be capable of killing a man to gratify the object of his wishes. The latter appears to be his favourite character; as may be supposed from the false energy he every where endeavours to promote. Yet I cannot conceive how a person of this character can be said exactly to observe the scriptural precept; and it is wonderful that those who can

approve of the crime of suicide should not think of suggesting it, to guard the life of a fellow-creature from his phrenzy. All I can say of such a person is, that his desire of doing good shews him not to be, in every respect, selfish and corrupted. The presumption of sentiment may appear to us in a ludicrous point of view. Shall we not prefer the plain man, who is fair in all his dealings with us, to the sentimentalist, ever imposing on himself and others by smiles and plausible language, while he impudently possesses himself of their property? Was not the unassuming Louis the Sixteenth more amiable than the most zealous reformer who wades to power through the blood of his countrymen? There is another precept in the Scriptures adapted to those who are endowed with constitutional sensibility; which is, "love your neighbour as yourself." Strong love, in a finely constituted frame, is excited by the beauty, or disposition to affect us, of outward objects; which so manifests itself by the facilities it finds for that purpose, as to win naturally an unqualified approbation. Where this is responsive to good general intention, we advance very near to human perfection; and indeed wherever it exists, the mind cannot be wholly depraved. The

want of principles cannot yet have permitted an originally good inclination to run to waste. But in this precept as in the former, a comparison is suggested to us between ourselves and others; and comparison is the work of reason, not sentiment. Some persons who reject sublimity and beauty as the basis of virtue, substitute taste. This, it must be confessed, is nearer to the mark; for taste includes in its idea a portion of fitness, being so much as contributes to set off sublimity and beauty. But more important considerations enter into the idea of morals than those of superfluous amusement; owing to which a fitness over and above what taste requires, is necessary for them. Were we insensible to this fitness, we might, in many respects at least, prefer the character of Cæsar to that of Cicero. As men of genius, they were perhaps upon a par with each other; and the decent, manly address of enlightened policy, challenges more general respect than the querulous expostulations of disappointed virtue. But Cæsar's aim through life, was what every English character of talents and eminence would despise, to exalt himself upon the ruins of his country; while Cicero once saved it, in a signal manner, from imminent destruction, and, through

life, was labouring to preserve it from its enemies; being, I am clearly of opinion, the best man of his time. The qualities however of morals that belong to taste, that interest and repel disgust, were Cæsar's; and those which win our colder approbation through the medium of reflection, were Cicero's. Nevertheless, should a servile imitator characteristically adopt the foibles of a Cicero, and fancy that by so doing he acquired his virtue, he would so little attain his end, that he would be wandering still farther from it; as common sense must seem to dictate, that every species of excellence, wherever found, is desirable to persons endeavouring to be, as far as they can naturally, either upon a large or a small scale, serviceable to their fellow creatures.

A leaning towards fitness is favourably exemplified in the person who distinguishes himself prudently and rationally, as the champion of religion and morality; and while he forbears, as much as possible, to fetter the powers of man, is labouring to deliver down to posterity, unimpaired, the standard of Christian virtue. He will be able to see through shallow declamations against war in the abstract, when that necessary evil is the only method

of extricating his country from present trouble, and obtaining for it secure peace : convinced, he can accomplish his own plans of benevolence in no other way, than by steadily and openly supporting, at critical times, those of the government, on which they depend. Such a person is, on many accounts, of the first use to a community ; for even the indulgence of the passions has been thought more gratifying for the regulations of principle, of which he is the guard ; and of this temperance is an instance. Though vice has certainly in its power to yield some exclusive pleasures to *individuals*, yet virtue, if accompanied with wisdom, renders *societies* flourishing ; and therefore if its exclusive pleasures do not balance those of vice to every individual of the present time, it may by a perseverance in useful and honourable policy, to his posterity, and thus pay, by degrees, every debt of justice with ample interest. So necessary is it for principle to bear a considerable proportion to passion in the world !

In describing a bad example of the leaning towards fitness, I need not inveigh long in this loyal country, and at the present period, against what may be called that *mathematical benevolence*,

which computes the immediate, apparent good that can result from different courses of conduct, and adopts that which is followed by the greatest, though attended by a gross violation of the laws, and as gross an injury to the feelings. It is certain, that such immediate apparent good, ought to be constantly reflected upon, and continually, as far as possible, regulate our mode of adhering to laws and principles, which long experience has proved founded upon nature; but the wise and the well meaning are not tempted to proceed farther. They always suppose differences made in every case by varieties in the human character and understanding, and by the good consequence of respecting motives, the source of actions, no less than actions; as to promote the happiness of man, they judge it necessary to study his mind and nature, and for that purpose to permit them quietly to unfold themselves during a long period of time, instead of appearing always altered by the distorting hurry they derive from a systematic benevolence.

To guard against the evils of this inconsiderate manner of doing, or rather attempting good, Burke, when he wrote against the French Atheists, recommended politeness, in preference to justice, as a

principle of conduct ; and indeed it is a more natural one, and more easily understood and acted from by the mass of mankind. Yet many are far from infallible, who pretend to it ; nor are they always qualified for reading lectures upon its merits to those whom they would teach. Happily no worse character than such a pretender is common enough to form a striking instance of fitness ill understood ; and I shall therefore venture a caution against his prejudices. It does not follow, because politeness is highly praise-worthy, that therefore the qualities of a Chesterfield enable a man to rule a country better than those of a Chatham ; that any one's literary character, or claims on the public, are in the exact proportion of his *supposed* urbanity : or that it shews bad breeding to speak the truth, when it confutes the arguments of another extremely desirous of establishing a particular point. It is possible for this kind of reasoning, however, to be made a fatal use of by one of this cast, who has no sincere wish for the advancement of any art or science, or the recompence of any merit, while he raises his sober hue and cry at the slightest appearance of incorrectness in the actions of his competitor for distinction ; and influences his weak acquaintance,

whatever literary or political tricks he would perform, to keep the theatre always clear for his own exhibitions, however unedifying and attractive. But this is to cultivate politeness upon commercial principles, and to leave out of the idea of the accomplished man that uncorrupted honour and purity of heart, by which it was distinguished in *the departed days of chivalry*.

DEFECT AND DEFORMITY.

By these principles I mean the opposite to fitness. It may seem strange to look about equally for favourable and unfavourable examples of them, as what is defective and deformed, cannot be supposed, strictly speaking, at any time eligible, in itself, or as such; but those rules, a transgression of which suggests the idea of it being, as made by man, imperfect, not only are they liable to be altered, so far as not to explain away the obvious dictates of Christian morality, but, in the mean time, a slight violation of some few is to be winked at. In describing two opposite principles, it may be expected I should instance in the good examples of the one, the opposite to the bad examples I may instance of the other. I however do not, because

I only notice what is most observable and most interesting to my countrymen under each head. The judgment of the generality may be wrongly reflected upon as defective and improper, when they rather cherish their prejudices in favour of every thing old, than listen to the unsettling, though plausible arguments of theoretic reasoners. The bad effect of their plausibility to a government, as well as to science, very shortly discovers itself. Sophie's awkward management of the plane, in the *Emile* of Rousseau, is beautifully defective. There is an apparent want of fitness too, which appears amiable, when a man's openness of temper throws him off his guard, either in conversation, or during the execution of his plans. The Careless husband, in Cibber's play, compensated to the other characters for his faults, by his inability to conceal them. In allowing, however, his claim, I must observe, that the constitutional *beauty* with which he charmed, might win instantly a degree of favour which a long series of approved actions might fail to obtain; and we should be aware of this circumstance. Nor ought mere openness to be confounded with honesty; as it has been, especially of late, perhaps in consequence of what is called the *new school*

of manners. Both the old and the new school have their respective merits at different times ; but the merits of honesty are of a distinct nature. The openness of honesty is like that of truth ; of which Montagne says, that it is absolutely necessary to speak it at all times ; but that to say every thing is foolish. Were honesty and openness to be held completely synonymous, there would appear a resemblance between the steady and useful sagacity of a Hambden, and the crooked policy of a Cromwell. The wise and deceitful both take advantage of ignorance ; yet the one does it to obtain credit that belongs to him, setting no examples of indirectness ; and the other to defraud his neighbour of what does not, in impairing the standard of virtue. Defectiveness in the fine arts is far from always meriting disapprobation. Such spirit is capable of being communicated to a poem or a picture by a want of finish, that if we are sufficiently just to an unconstrained correctness, we may safely countenance a happy incorrectness, of style. In my opinion, it is properly recommended to the generality of dramatists, not

“ To be too strictly bound to time and place ; ”

and I have always intended to favour this notion in any criticisms I have written; but when the playwrights, supported by some opinions, though moderate, of learned critics, determined, that because perfection ought not rashly to be attempted, it ought therefore to be condemned and ridiculed, I was induced to make the experiment, whether a want of *competent* interest necessarily arose out of the observance of the unities, or out of particular qualities of writing hitherto connected with it; and in consequence I composed the tragedy which I have published.* Among the bad examples of impropriety and defectiveness are crimes, when they result less from passion than want of principle; and the perpetrator is less to be considered as offensive, or vicious, than as false. Treachery, deceit, untruth, ingratitude, or depravity, then predominates in them; and it is certain that some of these may double at least the guilt of the most heinous crimes. Also the unaccommodating incorrectness of manners, not arising from natural weakness or inexperience, of the unprincipled person, who

Jura neget sibi nata, nihil non arroget armis;

* Vide Note IV. in Appendix.

where there really are such people. Unfavourable examples in the fine arts are the most objectionable German dramas, and similar works of these days, in which enthusiasm has sacrificed propriety to sentiment; for it is a mistaken notion, that nature is more the character of the German, than of the French theatre. Lessing, indeed, properly warned his countrymen to avoid the superstitious propriety of the French tragedians, whose *dramatis personæ* drew the attention too much to the uninteresting distinctions of custom; and he therefore insinuated, that such differences, made between men, were unnatural. It was not however to be foreseen, that an imaginary state of society would be represented in other works, which would totally set at defiance the rules of Horace respecting truth of character, and erring in the opposite extreme, endeavour to captivate by a novel mixture of incoherent passion, and ranting philanthropy. I know very well that of the two writers I am alluding to, one has dramatic skill and invention, and the other force and imagination, in sufficient abundance to have placed them among the first writers of the present day, had they not deserted the most faithful guides, such as Aristotle, Horace, Boileau, and Hurd, to follow one or two modern

French critics, who have cajoled them into their present peculiar style of writing.* Therefore the German dramas may rank with Shakspeare's for irregularity, but they cannot for nature; since nature supposes a just mixture of sentiment and fitness; and they force upon us the former, not tempered enough to become palatable to persons of common critical sobriety. Shakspeare indeed, like Homer, is sometimes *sleepy* in attending upon us; but when he exerts himself, it is both safely and agreeably. And surely even the reformer, if a good poet, and wishing to distinguish himself, will take advantage of existing prejudices, rather than fruitlessly endeavour to create a new taste, in order to gratify it by a particular exertion of talents. Composition is the last thing that prejudice should cling to. The reformer may alter his own conduct

* It is not the time for good Englishmen to tear every leaf of laurel from the brows of the moral and religious Dr. Johnson, whose value is acknowledged by unprejudiced men of strong sense, in order to decorate those critics, who have been most instrumental in spreading revolutionary enthusiasm, or are more inveterate to England, than she ever was to France, by recommending an eternal war between the two countries.

and manners; but if he would fundamentally alter composition, he must probably make small progress in his own time; and perhaps his posterity, in the third and fourth degree, may hardly be prepared for a description of such beings as the heroes of modern philanthropy. Such is the absurdity exhibited by a great predominance of sentiment in literature! It is sometimes encouraged by the favourable point of view in which its principle is shewn, and sometimes by an assistant one. Lessing's idea was nearly the same thing as Dr. Johnson's preference of the manners of nature, to the manners of custom. This opinion being more plausibly expressed by the latter is particularly calculated to attract; nor is it less just. It forms however a rule extremely liable to abuse, and which, like many others, ought not to be repeated on all occasions. The assistant principle operates, when not only the manners of custom are simply violated, but when, in the violation of them, the imagination is defrauded of some *beightening* to the picture it can, to be surfeited with some it cannot, enjoy. It is certain that a display of the passions has more importance in poetry, than moral and political remarks; or the pomp and pageantry that may be either summoned into a laboured description, or exhibited at the

theatre. It may, on the other hand, happen, that nature would be ever more *faithfully* described by a presumption and brilliancy of colouring, and would be lost sight of by the vulgar, and yet vain mannerism of sentiment, which, by stripping to shew it plainer, would disguise it. Moral and political remarks in Virgil and Milton are not, as in the *Henriade*, ever prominent, or principal: they are always kept down, and made subordinate; in consequence of which they seem to me to give relief and energy to their composition. Nor does Homer, the simplest poet in his style, banish every thing that glitters, from his imagery. Though he constantly, as he ought, renders the manners of custom subservient to the manners of nature, he profusely enough scatters over his writings epithets and descriptions, dazzling us with arms and accoutrements; and such are to be found in most pages of the *Iliad*.* For the same good sense that made him keep out of view such images in *Ithaca*, induced him sedulously to rouse the imagination with the whole

Pomp and circumstance of glorious war

* As the *τιυχια παμφανωνία*, the *ηνια σίγαλοινα*, the *φαιων μασιλα*, *οι ασπίδα*, *οι τρυφαλαιαι*, &c. &c.

on the plain before Troy. It is therefore truly in the spirit of reform, to adopt one principle of composition as our favourite, and push it as far as it will go, whatever others we violate by our systematic prejudice. Indeed, before we loudly condemn any *real* defect which offends us, we even then should examine, whether there be not some excellence, on a different principle, to compensate for it, which, by drawing off the mind rationally, might account for its failure in one part of composition. Yet the present rage for sentiment, which has succeeded the rage for propriety of the old French writers, is too prevalent to deserve tenderness. Indeed sentiment cannot have its effect as such, without propriety; and those imitators of the German critics and poets, who would direct our attention only to dramas containing a huge unformed mass of sentiment, might well attend to Burke's remarks in his Introduction on Taste. Among its objects, he names, not only the passions, but *their relations*. Thus reason must be called in to the aid of sentiment, in order, as it were, to turn it to the sun, and shew its latent colours either in the poet's or the critic's view. The brightest passage, or the criticism marked with

the truest enthusiasm, displays the greatest command of reason; the ideas of which must be collected by the same rapidity of genius as those of sensibility, and treasured up, (allowing for the various characters of minds) in the same proportion. But the unnatural excessive horror that affects the tragic spirit, or the taste that only inquires whether there exist either such horror, or scenes, well described by *sentiment run wild*, while it pretends to be nothing but passion and sensibility, indicates the most mechanical and mathematical of all turns of mind; since the only effort looked for is a continuation of the same dull and monotonous strain, from the beginning to the end of the work, without any effectual endeavour to change our ideas, or elevate and relieve our fancy.*

But a more material impropriety, or deformity, is justly complained of in more direct attacks of sentiment on morality. I will instance them in the

* For a character of the principal works of this kind, I refer the reader to the edition lately published of the *Baviad* and *Mæviad*; the author of which is not only competent to judge of them by acknowledged taste, but by an acquaintance with the German language.

popular play, called the Stranger. There, a woman, who has eloped with an unworthy wretch, from a husband possessing admirable qualities, is, by a pathetic denouement, at which it would not be unnatural for principled persons, at intervals, to smile, restored to the favour of the husband, and the esteem of *a part* of the audience. This event has been erroneously supposed similar, in moral tendency, to that which forms the subject of Jane Shore; though in the one case, no obvious temptation has led to the fault, and all desirable happiness followed it; while in the other, the greatest and most acknowledged temptation caused it, and death and protracted misery are shewn its punishment. The fate of Jane Shore reminds us of the woman taken in adultery. To shew pity, and abstain from harshness, is very possible in observing the difference between actions; but when not contented with a little loss of consequence, for a very public violation of duty, a female grows sentimental, and aspires, as to a prize given by the Society of Arts, to the honour of becoming the heroine of a family tale, I think if it is candour that indulges her, it is candour of a modern stamp. Rational lenity will allow all

her good qualities to operate, without her making any stir about what has been done. The assertion that the individual female may be reformed by this restoration to favour, reminds me of the lines,

Ye gods, annihilate both time and space,
And make two lovers happy !

The chance of a relaxation of morals all over Christendom, is of more consequence than that of the perseverance of one person in an evil course. I do not doubt the very surprise to her, not to mention the flattery of pride, must have some effect; but the measure is not necessary to encourage general mercy: nor is it to discredit jealousy, that odious, but little prevalent passion; and therefore if no new, certain good result from bestirring ourselves, why should we be at the pains of doing so? Did we then approve of enlisting the passions into the service of virtue, as I have recommended, (and this is what we do in passing laws to encourage morality, which remove from them the incitements to outrage), there could be no objection to it on other accounts, in the present instance; and this would not be done without allowing weight to every

popular prejudice that may occasion pain, as far as it is consistent with prudence and virtue.*

UGLINESS.

It is natural to confound this with deformity, as they both commonly displease; and it is in the course of things to reject what offends us, from mechanical causes, and establish a rule to prohibit it; a transgression of which then goes against the judgment, as well as the feelings. I should imagine Mr. Price had fallen into this error, in considering beauty as synonymous with the complete human form. He takes notice of the figurative sense of the Latin word *forma*, when it signifies beauty, as implying the identity he remarks between form and

* A new-made virtue, especially, cannot find the passions disciplined into respect. For instance, in looking upon the hero of this play, in one temper of mind, I may perceive his brows decorated with the laurels of his triumph; yet, in another I may, from the contagion of prejudice, by no means see them similarly adorned. Also, an old acknowledged virtue, when boasted of by its possessor, may, from its more manifest dignity, excite envy: but the virtue here represented, though its character be continually strengthened by new acquiescences, and new boasts of them, would produce rather less, than more, of that passion.

beauty. But, as Burke observes, "beauty may exist with any proportions:" and though we see in the Farnese Hercules, much less delicacy and gradual variation, than in the Apollo de Belvedere; less, in short, of that character which is the opposite to ugliness, yet there is nearly or quite as much of fitness, the character which is the opposite to deformity. If we happen in travelling to come up to a swamp, stretched out before us, of an ordinary size, we shall esteem it an ugly object; and its dingy colour, and want of soft variety, will prevent its affording us any pleasure; but it is still in the order of things, and does not shock us, by transgressing propriety. Should we, however, employ a landscape gardener to lay out our grounds, and were he to convert an undulating lawn before the house into such a swamp, by way of improving them, he would, by so doing, communicate to it deformity, as well as ugliness; because he would err against the rules adopted by people of his profession, and by which fitness excluded ugliness. The swamp in this case obviously would, and in the other would not, have in it what is faulty.* For it is one thing for our passions not to be flattered, and another to be simply disap-

* Note V. Appendix.

pointed in what we expect. We shall be displeased with a perfect chair of an ugly shape and colour, while we experience no effect from one not remarkable, which wants a leg. Ugliness is full as little fertile in subjects of admiration, as deformity; and the good examples of this, as well as the other, must be due to particular circumstances. One is association.—Cowper says,

The jay, the pye, and even the boding owl,
That hails the rising moon, have charms for me.
Sounds inharmonious in themselves and harsh,
Yet heard in scenes where peace for ever reigns,
And only there, please highly for their sake.

A natural harshness, loudness, or lowness of the voice, a hesitation in the speech, too hurried motions, a teasing slowness and formality in doing business: all these are consistent with the observance of the rules society have judged adequate to the support of virtue and good manners. The imitative arts rely both on ugliness and deformity, since these exist in the world; but they ought to be tempered in composition with a sufficient infusion of sublimity and beauty.

MEDIOCRITY.

Though ideas in themselves not sublime, or beautiful, or ugly, may be considered as having Mediocrity, their relation to the mind that receives them, and to its stock of knowledge, may give them the effect and importance of *novelty*. An able mathematician may, like Israel Lyons, be disappointed on reading Virgil, in finding that nothing is there proved; and yet, wanting the ideas of sensibility, he may so abound in those of mere judgment, and conversant about lines and angles, that he may infinitely extend the limits of science, and prove useful to his fellow creatures. For we should regard quantity more than quality of ideas, if we would encourage useful characters; and not prefer a secondary poet to an extraordinary person in any other line. Such poets have, I think, been systematically encouraged in Europe within these twenty years, that more people might assist in writing down government; and taste has with this view been decried, that harshness and distortion of thought, which they must be equal to, might pass for sentiment and sublimity, which they might not. To establish this prejudice, the worst part of Longinus has been

triumphantly quoted. The style of writing, truly worthy of illuminism, which was the object, could not, in such hands, meet the approbation of the critic of genuine feelings. Such poets, when most elevated, would seem to tower, not like the eagle, but the snake, and strikingly resemble the seductive one which, to bring about the fall of man, reared itself upon its

“Circular base of rising folds;”

and moving on to the *liberty tree* of false knowledge,

———“made intricate seem straight

“To mischief prone.”

In the same manner too, they were to address themselves particularly to the female sex, in order, by their co-operation, more easily to delude the whole human race. But let not *us* too neglect to search for first-rate qualities, because second-rate ones are more abundant and *prone to mischief*. A truly powerful writer, who would naturally be afraid to act upon the principles of the French Revolution, may boldly accept the allotted task of doing good to mankind; nor does it signify whether sensibility or judgment preponderate in such a mind. It is the command of ideas, whether chiefly of the one sort,

or of the other, or equally of both, by which it possesses or deserves reputation. Burke is singular in uniting them equally in one work. But I should not forget I have already considered qualities so supremely possessed by that great man, and have to speak upon the subject of Mediocrity. I must observe then, that we should know how to esteem it, and be able to dispense, not only with sublimity and beauty, but with novelty; since nature has ordained also this quality, however ambition and prejudice are unwilling to tolerate it. It is remarkable that we should extol only Mediocrity in fortune, and a want of it in characters. An Italian poet,* equal to the comprehension of the nature of man, even supposes its possessors, or those who neither do good nor harm, inclined to envy those who are apparent losers by doing either. And certainly the love of notice and distinction implanted in us, renders this very conceivable, as it forms, I think, the great claim of passive virtue; for, as notice and distinction procure solid advantages, interest, as well as ambition, may be gratified by a dexterous transgression of the rules of duty. Persons therefore without sufficient vigour to propose measures, and exert themselves,

* Dante.

for the good of mankind, who yet have the manliness to stand firm in respecting the laws, and scorn the often profitable qualities, any one can display, of false sublimity, beauty, and novelty, merit much more reward than it is the fashion to allow them. For passive virtue resembles the sober back-ground of a picture, which equally gives truth and eclat to the colours laid upon the principal figures; nor yet setting them off as a worthless foil, but as a labour of taste and excellence. Characters marked by Mediocrity, of course wanting energetic qualities, may yet be usefully employed, as the studies and efforts they are formed for, will, on examination of them, shew. They may derive pleasure from the cultivation of literature, and even sensibly assist its progress. The character of Minim in the Idler, is intended to appear ridiculous for a want of originality in his critical notions. That it does not merit high admiration, is certain; yet the time that has elapsed since it was written, has brought the proof, that it is less injurious to taste, in expressing our sentiments on points of criticism, to judge by the mere *gout de comparaison*, and respect established opinions, than to furnish *some little* that is new, and confound the ideas of men by a great deal of paradox and

absurdity. At least, calmness and caution are in the power of any one, who may withhold his approbation awhile from a new critical prejudice, and be thus really instrumental in protecting taste. He may also interest himself in, and promote the success of schemes for the improvement of his country and mankind. A disposition to improve society, corrected by a consciousness of the insufficiency of human reason for that end, unassisted by laws and institutions, and an unwillingness to attempt it, unless recommended, not only by men of the greatest abilities, but of the greatest judgment, in a country, is truly desirable for all its inhabitants. Whether that part of them I am here considering, though every man possess what is essential of dignity, can all think it rational to feel pain at the reputation acquired by others from experiments in agriculture, mechanics, or any art, I cannot tell; and yet it seems to me as absurd to be displeased at the man who safely wins lasting advantages for us, and for mankind, by outstripping his competitors in the race of genius, as at the horse who enriches us by the ruin of our friends, though at the risk of our own, at Newmarket.

CENSURE ought to be sufficiently fearful of acting unjustly by that description of people who have a disposition to *novelty*, and who may be said to *move faster than others*; their ideas, either from greater rapidity, or greater eccentricity, leaving those of the generality behind them. Ingenious and inquisitive men, perhaps, form the most interesting example of this disposition; which, when it only impels them, in the pursuit of knowledge, to examine the nature of things by the rules of common sense and sober reason, tends chiefly to the improvement of existing systems, and runs no risk of doing harm. It then ought to be admired as productive of great achievements: nor needs the champion of science perform the least glorious ones, who submits to retreat from the divine shield and warning voice which protect religion. We may conjecture how one of these safe, yet enterprizing spirits, might reason with himself on perceiving the fate of some who have preceded him in the same career. When Burke became a philosophical writer, he was witnessing the reception Warburton met with in the world, and might have argued thus in consequence: "I see clearly I must not be permitted to answer my objectors, in order to explain to the public the

principles I laid down, though my intention was to throw light upon interesting subjects; but the generality of censorious critics cannot conceive any views in the authors they criticize, but the superficial ones of vanity; and therefore my end, as well as Warburton's, being put upon a par with that of the rest, I have only to choose the least of two evils, and not like him, carelessly encounter prejudices which threaten real inconvenience. If I reply in a single word, I may be called an angry author; and it may be said I ought not to write, if I cannot brook objection. If, then, a fair, unsuspecting reception must be despaired of from the present public, it is the wisest way at once to consider my Essay as lost labour, and not destined to be satisfactorily explained, while I am alive to benefit from the explanation of it. I will through life be called a theorist, however I despise the philosophy that confers that character; but will avoid being accused of vanity and misanthropy from the easy chair of the moralist, who does not take pains to understand me. My friend Johnson supposes Milton enjoyed distant fame in idea, with calmness and with confidence; but I cannot think it. If indeed Milton could value the prospect of notice after death, perhaps my friend

ought to have been contented with it only delayed to a period in his life-time, though it was, as he says of himself, ‘till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it?’ This is a natural sentiment, eloquently expressed. Let me then bid adieu to the lonely and unhonoured paths of science, and gradually accustom my ears to the busy hum of men. I will cultivate my talents for conversation and public speaking; and from the late consideration of my countrymen, may derive necessary support in that lawful *pleasure*, which I have maintained in opposition to former philosophers, to possess reality, and be of a positive nature.”

Ambition, where it does not principally exercise the reason, in ingenuity, but the passions, in pursuits and tempers that alarm the fears either of judgment or prejudice, may be attended with the effects of *sublimity*. We should at such times beware of thwarting it, merely because a less plausible passion than love: for, as Burke shews, it is evidently necessary to the well being of man. Nor ought that sympathy to be immaturely stifled, by which we delight in the animation of contests evi-

dently not of our seeking; though perpetual examples of prudent forbearance should be given to promote peace, and a *rational* hope entertained of finally putting an end to war and devastation in the world. The term "proper pride," has been objected to by a distinguished writer of the present day;* and perhaps it may be inaccurate to use the word "pride" in a good sense. I am afraid, however, it is often applied where it ought not to be, either to those whose imaginations naturally and harmlessly kindle with the sublime of virtue, and act in consequence, or those who clumsily perform their duties, and err, but rather by a fault of the head, than of the heart; owing to which, the result of their behaviour has, to common eyes, the effect of pride; while perhaps their senatorial exertions have essentially benefited a country. In such cases, a diligence in making second causes subservient to the public good, in obedience to principles in human nature adapted to the various dispositions of men, is injuriously construed into a disrespect of the first cause, because He is not always speciously referred to. In the present contest, while our enemies were pressing

* Dr. Gisbourne.

every passion and principle of human nature into their service, there has been a perpetual occasion of reviving in the minds of all, the images of our ancient prosperity, instead of resorting more frequently to a press-gang, or a tax-gatherer. The sentiment they excite is quite distinct from the presumptuous philosophical vanity which prevailed among the Romans, and which has been mentioned as one reason of the character of humility, which marks the Christian religion. Pride certainly may, and does exist at all times ; but, on the other hand, it is in vain to attempt to eradicate from human nature a disposition to glow with the consciousness of superiority ; though it is our constant duty to keep it within bounds, and to banish real pride from among mankind. But our cause would not have suffered a little, had men of ardent imagination been represented as unchristian and criminal, for indulging themselves in encomiums upon their country ; and it might have received no less injury from favouring an opinion that our nobility, for instance, because, no more than any other set of men, without exception, possessed of insinuating qualities, were monsters of aristocratic pride.—

People have inferred pride from a spirit of independence; as, for instance, from the constant rejection of honours and emoluments; but it seems to me, the more we wish a voluntary dependence general, as suited to the nature of limited monarchy, the more should we rejoice at the resolute independence of a few. For first, we see that men are born different; they are active or indolent, bold or timid; and as virtue and vice are proportionate to the presence and absence of temptation, those actions ought to be most favoured in them, especially if legal, which are analogous to their dispositions. And, secondly, love should be considered as a passion, which is imperceptibly to gain ground, and ultimately to prevail; but for that very reason should be somewhat kept in check, lest the system it adopts should, by its corruption, delay its promised advantages to a remoter period.

Those therefore who, with Burke, consider England and France as rival countries, entertain safe opinions. We may, like him, liberally reject the idea of a national enemy; but let us consider how delusive a quiet was enjoyed by the submission of the world, even to Augustus, and judge how far it is proper to

rely upon the beautiful in virtue.* Ideas of pleasure were then more acceptable than ideas of delight: yet the very next reign (marked by the death of Christ) began to make those repent of the change, who thought *not only of themselves, but of their posterity*. I do not reckon the grievance to have been so much that the people were under restraint, as that their rulers were not; and if the cabinet intrigues of any one country should ever be enabled constantly to bear down the opposition of every other, such instances must appear of human presumption, that we should have much to answer for if we prepared their way. I therefore cannot help wondering, whenever admirable learning and genuine talents condescend to write against the balance of power, and represent it as nugatory; for, just as without storms and gloomy skies, it is impossible for us to enjoy sunshine, so without the ideas of sublimity, we cannot, in the affairs of men,

* Quere: would it not be rational to begin to abolish the slave trade, by ascertaining how far the nations engaged in it would be willing to do so, and obtaining from them an agreement for that purpose? We ought certainly not only to melt at miserable servitude, when it is proved, but redress it.

derive either continued pleasure or use from those of the quality I shall next, in its turn, defend.

In censuring the excesses of *beauty*, we should be upon our guard against the more ferocious passions, though not those only. Envy of the pleasure of others often actuates us, when we wish to find fault with them; and in such cases, we are apt to discern ourselves, or at least point out to others, the contemptible quality of false beauty. For instance, we remark *meanness* in that dependence, the frequent utility of which I have been observing, when it does not change the principles of a government, or the habits of a people. When, however, reason shews its necessity, its supposed meanness vanishes. If a minister has no right to exercise his judgment in a legal application of the public money, to whatever uses appear to him for the interest of the state; nevertheless to save it, when in danger, is his duty, as well in peace as in war. If then temporary violence threatened to it from without, oblige him to have recourse to one necessary evil for protection, constant violence threatened from within will induce him not less hastily to resort to another, of a milder character, and for which rewarded merit would compensate. A man

who from radical ill nature thwarts ambition, not as appearing singular, or threatening trouble, but merely as soliciting concurrence, is not enough indulgent to pleasure; nor is the *censor morum*, who dwells upon the past frailties of persons of either sex, which neither set examples, nor were intended to do so. Mercy in such cases amounts to justice, as it is sound policy. But let us consider the most important prejudices against *beauty*. Objections have been lately made to the scriptural precept, by which we are enjoined to love our enemies.* So far however am I from subscribing to the opinion of its impropriety, that I think it recommended no less by its justice than expediency. It will be said, perhaps, that to *love our enemies*, is to abate of the respect due to our friends; but why are words supposed to mean more than they express? I am mistaken if it has ever been denied, that we may make distinctions between our fellow creatures; and if gratitude be not discountenanced by the Scriptures, but, on the contrary, inculcated, we are even bound by it to make them, in favour of our friends, as the only requital of their kindness. Nor ought we perhaps to shew a want of prudence and firmness to our enemies, that would encourage

* See Paine's *Age of Reason*.

them to repeat acts of injury to us, and through us to the community. In the mean time a principle is made to operate, whereby continued examples of forbearance and forgiveness may imperceptibly moderate the passions of men, diminishing in every country *in the same proportion*, the popularity of war; and it becomes a check upon ambition, not which impedes, but which, on the contrary, favours, its progress, by preventing the loss of its time in heathenish insulting boasts of superiority over competitors; for the spirit of Christianity does not permit any high fancy to be either useless or injurious. This principle should be looked for preferably, like a mild south-west breeze, blowing regularly over a country, while the mind is made up no less to risk the inconveniences attending the change of wind to the most stormy quarter. But those who lean to modern philanthropy, may be compared to persons neglecting agricultural precautions against the weather, in expectation of perpetual spring, and Etesian gales eternally wafting them the sweets of Paradise. Sometimes, when the relaxed tone of mind we are considering is censured from being observed in company, we may be tempted to question the energy of the mind, and sometimes the sensibility of the heart. Another doubtful judgment

may arise from critical prejudice. Though love and beauty have been carried to such excess in novels, yet it has been the fashion in poetry to insist almost wholly on sublimity. It may have been well said by Longinus, and even repeated a few times after him, that it is more satisfactory to contemplate a large river, like the Nile or Euphrates, than a small though limpid rivulet. The grand is certainly desirable for the poet; but is the beautiful always at his command? And may not those who make the greatest stir about the character that strikes, want not only the will, but the power, of affecting us even by that which pleases? Both of these, as Hurd says of comedy and tragedy, are amply sufficient for any one person: and I have sometimes observed, that when a poet has affected to contemn the ease and nature of beauty, he has, from too little strength of imagination to raise him to the sublime, though insuring applause from fashionable prejudice, marked his composition with the qualities of ugliness and deformity.

Objections to the fine arts, may here properly be coupled with those made to the sublime and beautiful, in order to answer them together. D'Alembert

conceded too much to theory, in defending one of them against Rousseau, when he allowed, that should men gradually grow better, it might be reasonable to expect they should be satisfied with the social pleasure they would enjoy within their families, and neglect other resources. But this is not the common course of things. In proportion as nations refine and improve, what is useful is separated from what is agreeable, by the division of labour, that both of them may be made more beneficial in their several ways; and thus it is likely that the fine arts, as well as all others, will be cultivated daily with less distracted attention. We may by these means superadd the pleasures of imagination to the pleasures of society and friendship; and there is no reason to think them, with Rousseau and D'Alembert, naturally separable. I must here acknowledge the judgment with which Miss Hannah More, in a work of which a large part possesses real merit, reconciles all interests, by reflections very instructive to those who cultivate poetry; neither circumscribing their exertions on the one hand, nor justifying in them, on the other, the slightest departure from the rules of Christian morality.

As sentiment should prevail over reason in the

fine arts, the end of which is to amuse and interest, so reason should prevail over sentiment in those pursuits, the ultimate tendency of which is, to profit and instruct. The improper censure and discouragement, therefore, of *fitness*, and the injudicious sacrifice of its interest, to that of other qualities in things we either produce, or pronounce our judgments of, should be carefully avoided in material concerns, and reason allowed to remain quite neutral, with her head cool, and her affections under regulation, so far, at least, as never to infringe that justice, which is then frequently the question, between man and man. The worst consequence, which may in such a case be experienced of letting the sublime and beautiful encroach upon the province of fitness, though already described, shall first be reconsidered here, with a view of pointing out the means of avoiding it; especially as it is to co-operate with some sensible gentlemen of the present time, who profess to encourage good behaviour in the poor; to do which, we should all be on the watch, so as not to be influenced by the sublime and beautiful, in imposing forwardness, and in flattering and advantageous attention.

Unless taste itself be corrupt, it will be gratified

H

with its proper object. The prudent use, then, of a knowledge of the world, pleasing artless manners, and a favourable physiognomy, will generally make their way. The difficulty is for the *character of a life*, which cannot equally affect the feelings, to press upon our attention; and where its claim is urged, the man may seem a creditor, having a demand upon us, and perhaps at best a general agreement takes place for the acknowledgement of his merits. But this boastful reward is better suited to a Heathen, than a Christian; and he will besides benefit the community, by sharing real advantages with others, so long as he preserves a due independence, instead of separating from them, as one rather to be admired, than imitated. For we judge wrongly, that consequent brilliancy will compensate to him for coldness; nor is his proper place like that

Where CLEARER skies glow round the FROZEN pole.

On the contrary, it is a task worthy of any society or institution emulous to disprove the saying, that "every body's business is nobody's," to let in upon him the genial summer ray of fortune; and warm him into a being animated enough to interest, and deserve good offices, from all around, instead of

leaving him environed by a cold and repulsive atmosphere. We see from a contemplation of man in every state of society, that to do justice is not, singly considered, at all an interesting occupation ; for could it be ranked among pleasures, it would prevail universally. It is only in countries where, by a happy concurrence of circumstances, good habits are formed, that the irregularity of the passions is restrained, and that men, vanquished by the undeniable force of truth, cannot stand by one another to resist it. It is the object of science to make truth more and more irresistible, and afterwards prevent the natural rebellion against its established power. How far this end may be attained in morals I will not say ; but if it be visionary and theoretical to hope, it is equally so to despair, in regard to uncertain things ; and it has never been demonstrated, though it may be doubted, that men will be made to blush at a continued encouragement of imposture. They are indeed called upon to do so the more, for the very reason they conceive excuses it. They say in their own vindication, that virtue is daily found to occasion prosperity, and secure friends, in the world. It is so ; but they should not take that merit to themselves which belongs

to the Deity. He has by these means done his part, enjoining them by the dictates of natural justice, the task of completing what he began. They should therefore be judiciously attentive to every claim, neither injuring worth by too much officiousness, nor too much neglect; and neither making its cause odious by ill-timed and unaccountable favour, nor by uniform contemptuous opposition to its wishes. They should likewise allow a man indulgence in proportion as he has voluntarily foregone it; and not, from a false and cruel idea of consistency, punish him, by imposing new hardships, for the sacrifices by which he has benefited others. Some remarks of Butler, in his apology, form a kind of hint to the present friends of true improvement, to effect these desirable purposes. "Power," he says, "in a *society*, by being under the direction of virtue, naturally increases, and has a powerful tendency to prevail over opposite power, not under the direction of it." And afterwards, "it is to be hoped, that the disproportion between the good and the bad, even here on earth, is not so great, but that the former have a natural power of prevailing to a considerable degree, if circumstances would permit this power to be united." "However, good

men over the face of the earth cannot unite ; as for other reasons, so because they cannot be sufficiently ascertained of each other's characters." But we have seen persons, within these ten years, uniting in a bad cause in every part of Europe, and may derive the only possible consolation from the reflection. Combinations in a good cause, now begun, if they do not command success, will nevertheless deserve it ; and that their encouragement of worth may interest people of various descriptions, it may be observed, that to amend is, likewise, to *polish* mankind. Morals operate in the same manner as politeness, by correcting and keeping down the passions ; and it may some time hence be thought as little plausible and gentlemanlike for him who overthrows a government, as for him who breaks open a house, to excuse his avarice in saying,

Tell me why, good Heaven,

Thou madest me what I am, with all the spirit,

Aspiring thoughts, and elegant desires

That fill the happiest man ? Ah, rather why

Didst thou not form me sordid as my fate,

Base-minded, dull, and fit to carry burdens ?

The ascendancy of fitness should be favoured likewise where we are to profit from talents, as well

as virtues. In no line perhaps is *judgment* so much tried as in that of politics, and therefore I will resort to them for an example. It would be puerile to trust our lives and fortunes, and every thing dear to us, to any statesman ambitious of governing a country, on account of possessing other qualities of understanding than those immediately or eventually concerned in improving property, and promoting public and private happiness. The brilliant declamation of Bolingbroke, illustrating enchantingly, if not instructively, the most interesting parts of history and philosophy, was valuable; but the solid good sense, the knowledge of things, and the extensive financial abilities, of Walpole, were, in the line in which the two great men rivalled each other, still more so. A perfect minister would, like Lord Chatham, be perceived to shake the senate with eloquence of the first order, and he would by sympathy, for the same reason, and not only from rule, know how to estimate the sublime and beautiful in the pursuits of those whom he was called to govern, wherever they mingled with them: he would, like him, too, by a commanding policy, string the nerves of war, and direct its force, as well as wisely influence the cabinets of foreign

countries: but he would, over and above this, be eminent, like Walpole, for great designs of a pacific character; and well digested plans to improve the revenues of his nation. In Lord Chatham, however, judgment sufficiently predominated; it being from his *measures* that he chiefly derived his glory. It did not, on the contrary, in Bolingbroke, whom we see in the last part of his correspondence, lately published, very differently from Lord Chatham, failing in a favourite expedition, planned by him, without making amends for his failure by the steady operation of a comprehensive system, that often accounts, and finally compensates, for one. In writings which have in view principally to instruct, their proper scope is not sufficiently considered, and the claims of fitness only in part satisfied. The generality of readers are *all for energy*; and scholars and learned men look out, perhaps, too constantly in such works, for language to the last degree select and accurate. But it is wonderful that those who are so able to distinguish between an effort to amuse the fancy, and one to inform the understanding, should, from the mixture of the styles in books on general topics, persist in frequently confounding them. Very sensible people,

in pronouncing an opinion of the style of a right reverend divine, have, I believe, chosen to include his critical works, in forming their judgment. Yet criticism is, in fact, philosophy; and where there is any thing of disquisition, such as philosophy requires, I should think it would be fair not to make style the smallest test of necessary merit. What should we think if the letters of Newton to his friends, on scientific subjects, were precisely estimated by the degree in which they possessed that ladylike ease and elegance, which forms the excellence of epistolary writing? If style be, in such cases, superadded to thought, the author's merit, and our advantage, certainly are so much greater. But he may be a master of style, and yet stoop to language somewhat too common, where matter, from the laws of the composition, is so comparatively important, that it may seem frivolous to attend to manner. Though Burke's Treatise is an unparalleled instance of the union of both; he thought himself in it obliged to "submit the style to the matter; and frequently give up the praise of elegance, satisfied with being clear." This is what a sound philosopher will be inclined to do, knowing the difficulty of the task he undertakes; but, on

the contrary, nothing is so quick, so flowing, so plausible, so every thing that captivates and imposes, as the philosopher of the modern school, while he is promising impossibilities. The undistinguishing demand for style is extremely connected with the spirit of modern philosophy; it is both its cause and consequence. When authors know the critic's attention will be chiefly directed to the structure of their language, they will be less careful to ground their doctrines on demonstration; and when no proofs are afforded by those who cultivate philosophy, but inconclusive arguments in favour of the sovereignty of the people, and other maxims and opinions enumerated in the work of which this is a continuation, the man of sense will require at least some food natural to his mind, and welcome it in the elegant treats of language and rhetoric. The true philosopher *carries weight* in running against his rivals, and his power ought only to be rated as what it appears, after a sufficient scrutiny. From the historian more graces of style may be expected; but even to him style should appear subordinate; and if there be any marked fidelity or diligence conspicuous in him, the faults of a common style will vanish in perusing him. The laborious arrangement

and management of historical materials, which fall to his lot, put him in a different situation from the person who publishes on the spur of the occasion, and endeavours to enlighten the public equally by matter and manner. On the other hand, it must be confessed he has more time to invigorate and refine his style, and that such time ought not to be thrown away.

A great prose writer has been rather obnoxious to the criticism that mistakes these matters, for leaning, either from habit or nature, more to reason than to sentiment. I do not rank Dr. Johnson so high as some have done, though I look upon him as one of the greatest men of his time. Much has been said against his fancy, and perhaps too much: but I have not met with many doubts of the infallibility of his judgment. He was certainly too able and well informed to let his judgment long lead him astray; and his reasoning faculties were conspicuously superior when exercised on casual objects; but he could not, like Burke, pursue a train of solid thought as far as was necessary;* and therefore discovers

* With this talent, unaided by the experience we have

some occasional inclination to be led away by the plausibility of abstract principles. Even in his old age, he retained prejudices which had been excited in him by tory declamation in the time of Sir Robert Walpole; and his life and works may afford some other instances of judgment influenced, though in a natural and ordinary degree. Force and originality of thought, were more characteristic of him than judgment. Not only however do I hold the majority of the remarks scattered over his instructive pages to be singularly valuable, but I cannot conceive how his style, either in prose or poetry, can be both disliked and condemned, as unworthy of being allowed classical, by any readers, aware of the distinction to be made between a good and a favourite author.

I have said, that as reason should predominate in works intended to instruct, so should sentiment in those intended to please. Yet, from what has been observed of Burke's definition of taste, under the head of defect and deformity, we may infer that

since all had, Burke would have preserved his sagacity in a cloyster; for

Men may be read, as well as books, too much.

sublimity and beauty are a vain boast, without a competence of fitness: nay, from the delusive resemblance of the false and true species of the qualities, must be infinitely injurious to taste. While the incautious critic is holding up to every eye his shining baubles, like a child's toys, and crying, "lo! here is genius," may not those of Israelitish art, and careless of, or unfriendly to, the community, favoured by time, make them pass current under the name of that which they too closely imitate? That the fine arts can borrow no aid from philosophy, in affecting the imagination, was not certainly Burke's opinion, when he said "men often act right from their feelings, who afterwards reason but ill on them from principle; but as it is impossible to avoid an attempt at such reasoning, and equally impossible to prevent its having some effect upon our practice, surely it is worth taking some pains to have it just, and founded upon the basis of sure experience."*

* Those would not agree to this, whose return for an Anti-jacobinical offering of loyal criticisms, could be an imputation of a Jacobinical turn for theory, very little desirable to their author, however it might excite his smile. A work is far advanced, called "Beaconsfield Evenings," being fictitious dialogues between Burke and his son, resembling

He says too, " a consideration of the rationale of our passions, seems to me very necessary for all who would affect them upon solid and sure principles:" and that " art can never give the rules that make an art." We may conclude then, he would but little approve of that enthusiastic criticism which favours all those faults in works of fiction which are most prevalent at the present day. Even the more moderate enthusiasm, coupled with taste and ingenuity, which opposed *true* poetry to wit and satire; and whatever superiority it justly assigned it over them, may have a tendency to encourage writers less in proportion to their own merit, than the dignity of the art they cultivate, was probably but in part admired by him. He

lecturés, in which I have founded the art of poetry upon the treatise of the Sublime and Beautiful. As in this work I think I shall have cleared Burke in philosophy, so in the other I shall, I doubt not, myself in criticism, from every possible suspicion of an attachment to theory; and it will be seen how far my opinions can be thought dogmatical. It ought to be recollected, by some who are in the habit of blaming things properly which are too theoretical, that a system of thinking does not deserve that epithet as such, nor even for any thing philosophical in its appearance, but simply for inability to stand the test of induction.

would scarcely have wished it to persuade the world, that Pope's poetry was nearly equalled by that of several cotemporaries, merely because reason preponderated more over fancy, though both more abounded, in it. It might indeed be thought judicious for the adherents of this system to pitch upon Gray, to countenance them, as a poet furnishing specimens of their favourite style; because in what little he has left us, we find all the strong sense of Pope giving spirit and grace to poetic imagery. But system does not prize her end merely for the arguments or authorities that may be quoted in its favour: she avails herself of them to recommend it to others; but even its real impropriety could only, by rendering it unpopular, diminish her zeal in the pursuit of it. We should therefore be the more careful that we award fame in the exact proportion of successful genius, whether shewn in *true* poetry, or in wit and satire; since, if the prejudice I am alluding to be indulged, we shall be over-run again with rhapsodies like those we used every where to meet with, distinguished by feeble obscurity and bombast, accompanied with every fault of affectation proceeding from it. Satire, as if in revenge for the opinion hinted of her inferiority, pointed

them out at their first appearance, and in good time therefore delivered us from them; though she properly spared whatever merit from a slight turn to theory might have involuntarily encouraged them. I trust, therefore, a force of reason equal to fitness in works of fancy, will be in future deemed requisite; and, that though true poetry is superior to wit and satire, yet that authors must, like Milton and Pope, excel equally in their respective arts, to let the preference we give to either of their arts, make any difference between them.

I shall add here what I have farther to say upon the present state of the drama; that we may determine how far Corneille, Racine, and their scholars, adherents also of fitness, or their cotemporaries in this country, have forfeited to living dramatists any rank as standard authors.

The issue of the controversy thirty years ago, concerning Shakspeare, being what every body knows, the enemies of genuine freedom in poetry, finding that they failed to crush it as partizans of tyranny, have become anarchists; and produced evils more to be deprecated, than any they had before occasioned. Burke, ever true to philosophy,

and superior to prejudice, as, in the passages last quoted from him, he shewed himself a friend to reason in criticism, so in other parts of his work, particularly his introduction, has appeared equally favourable to sentiment; indeed so much so, that he has perhaps involuntarily contributed to the tendency of works of fancy towards the extreme, at present prevailing, and which, was he now alive, he certainly would discountenance. Superficial reading might shew him, in one part of his introduction, inclined almost to have Mother Goose's Tales substituted for Milton, in the libraries of the learned. We need not, however, from the context, suppose him friendly to childish composition; nor need we any more imagine he would encourage a revolting want of fitness in works of art; they being, according to him, "the proper sphere of its power." I have described the perfect statesman, as one in whom every quality was united, in a superior degree, but fitness or judgment predominated: I should describe the perfect poet, as one who had as much of *novelty* as the statesman, and just as much more of *the sublime and beautiful*, as he had less of *fitness*. But a conspicuous command of this is inseparable from genius; while that perfect dislocation of the parts of

composition, produced by modern licentiousness in literature, may suggest to us the idea of infidelity, through the authors she influences, revenging herself on nature by the *lex talionis*, and persuading them to tear her limb from limb, in return for a similar punishment inflicted formerly upon her own votary, Mettius.*

We have been informed by one, whose business it more particularly is, to observe equally what passes in every part of the nation, and who has eloquently, as usual, delivered his opinion in the House of Commons, that what is chiefly at present to be deplored, is the general ascendancy obtained by the passions over the understanding. A proof of this is seen in the descriptions I have been giving of the state of poetry and criticism; though, as in poetry, sentiment ought to predominate over reason, their error is more venial than that of morals and politics. However extremes are naturally connected, as we shall see, in now proceeding to the consideration of censure, when severely or imaginarily levelled against *defect and deformity*. The

* I wish, however, it could be said of the theatrical and other witnesses of the retribution, “*Avertere omnes a tantâ foeditate spectaculi oculos.*”—All turned away their eyes from the disgusting sight. Liv. lib. i.

French philosophers many years ago, too much absorbed by science and letters, or too confident of them, to know, like experienced statesmen, what was beneficial for mankind, occasioned great mischief by the imaginary fitness their writings recommended to the credulous; and they encouraged in reading persons, an attachment, which has been since spreading among all, not to that which was most fit, but to that which had most strongly impressed upon it the character of fitness, and was an example of it of a bad kind. I have observed, in my account of fitness, that fortunately, characters very conspicuous for a reforming spirit were not, for some reason or other, the most easily met with in this country: yet there is a great deal of it diffused with science and literature, through this as well as other nations; which is not the less dangerous for operating in small and imperceptible portions. Hence we see virtuous, ingenious, and even loyal, people too readily obey the dictates of their own reason, in forming opinions either of private or public measures, as thinking it uncandid and irrational to make up their minds, when they are in the way of hearing arguments against them. They are often therefore seen canvassing them, in

conversation, by no means more cautiously, as they are more important; and if any happen to light upon a skilful reasoner who confutes him, he proclaims his own defeat, from admiration of the light of truth, while he as precipitately takes up his new opinion as he did his old. Such persons ought to know and reflect, that judgment, which exhibits a mode of fitness different from ratiocination, is much more worthy of confidence where material interests are concerned, in their determination on the propriety of measures. It may consist even with the same natural and acquired abilities, as the other supposes in any one person engaged in conversation. It is not therefore the plausible point of view in which objections to public conduct may be placed, which ought to influence us to assent to them. If the rectitude of the standard from which it deviates is only ideal, the love of rule and reason, which inclines to it, will be only an encouragement to indulgences they were intended to restrain; and if that superior discretion is thwarted, for which any set of men are called to the government of a country, principle and passion will be hindered from co-operating for the public good, and produce

respectively their worst consequences, in general vanity and sensuality.

There is similar danger in poetry and literature, where too much, as well as too little, fitness may be discovered. No error such as then takes place, is so excusable as one which proceeds from religion; and therefore we shall not think hardly of the involuntary encouragement given to prejudice by the learned and elegant Bishop Lowth; which, like that I hinted at a little way back, by another learned and ingenious divine, has had, I think, some consequences: it is, that the end of poetry was, in his opinion, rather *to instruct* than *to please*. This remark may have been inspired by that sacred poetry, which at the time employed his critical skill; but other reverend critics, I have mentioned, are of a different opinion from him; and so is that very pleasing poet, and still better critic, Dr. Beattie. It will have been inferred from my observations on Burke's philosophy, which has demonstrated the perfect dissimilitude between beauty and fitness, that he would assign different tasks to history and poetry. Undoubtedly the poet ought, on every account, to strive, if his subject permit, to add new

incentives to virtue, as he ought in no instance to countenance vice ; but there is a danger, of which we have had recent proofs, that his plan may be more attended to than its execution: he will never captivate, by an air and appearance worthy of him, if he is always leering at his moral. Unless he lose sight of it, either really or apparently, he will fix our attention more upon himself than his composition ; and though it has been no bad speculation, in these times of *philanthropy*, to make poetry the medium through which we convey to the public, notions favourable either to our vanity or ambition, yet it is not the enthusiast, but the critic, who is to fix the bounds of poetical propriety. The principle which furnished it a pretext, forbade the idea of self from influencing our wishes ; an absurdity and even inconsistency I have already spoken of on another occasion. It was, I think, founded on the ignorance of a distinction I have not seen fully marked, between a conduct proceeding from a sense of duty preferably to a motive of interest, and from mere charity towards mankind preferably to it. The rule by which we are commanded to do to others as we would be done by, supposes a man to have two objects, a selfish

and a social one, agreeably to Burke's analysis of our nature; and if he obey and acknowledge all the laws of duty, he may candidly confess that he values his private pleasure. It requires indeed the most obvious piety and disinterestedness, not to make this plausible contempt of ourselves appear, to some, hypocritical; and what indeed ought he to do, who obeys the Christian precept, and will only, for instance, defend his moral character, but not his character as one who, by means of fame or advantage, might add to his own enjoyments? Why he ought to confine himself to defending the moral character among others, of the poor, who ask alms of him. But this notion is not only wrong, because every man ought to have private advantages, from being one of that race which are the proper objects of religious benevolence; but the very assertion of his rights, of which nature has implanted in him a desire, may often do more good to others than to himself. He only ought to take care that this motive is invariably his principal, if not most cogent one; and then, if frivolous objection raise a clamour against him, he must be innocent in acting, from a persuasion of the utility of undissembled truth and ready justice.

But those will not deserve the *benefit of clergy* due to persons deriving from religion too superstitious a sense of fitness, whose methodistic cant is boldly and incessantly levelling blows at old establishments, and who call up those prophets recommended to our admiration in the elegant pages of Lowth, to denounce vengeance on the great and powerful in the most virtuous nation upon earth; a nation which, however, like others, deserving the visitation of Heaven for its misdeeds, is distinguished for virtue and energy of character, the union of which has never been witnessed so complete in any nation where wealth, luxury, and population, together with the advantages, have brought the evils attendant on them. These censurers of defect and deformity, may, with natural inconsistency, league themselves with the dramatic and other censurers of fitness already mentioned, while they play into each other's hands, in effecting their common schemes. But let us consider overstrained fitness, where taste is concerned alone, and not conjointly with morals. Mathematical benevolence, when it first appeared in France, was united with mathematical taste. At that time Voltaire, desirous of snatching the palm from Shakspeare, was ready

enough, with his admirers, to point out the defect and deformity of his writings, which he endeavoured to do, prejudicially to the cause of dramatic composition. Fortunately there was a lady who did not shrink from the task of defending her countryman; and encountering his defamer in the field of criticism, she gained a signal and acknowledged victory over him. Johnson has been too sparing of praise to her work, as we learn from Boswell, upon missing in it his favourite style of ratiocination. It, however, has that soundness of cautious criticism which he sometimes wants, and which it may, in part, owe to the modesty inherent in the female sex. We find that every quality of criticism was not attempted by all the ancient critics. Longinus is remarked by Hurd to be deficient in philosophy, though he allows his value; and this controversial work is, like his essay, simply characterized by *uniform taste*. It has appeared to me, that the ancient critics may have owed their lasting reputation to the soundness of their critical systems; the trains of their ideas rarely carrying those who followed them out of the right road. Longinus has sensibility, but he has likewise judgment (though he does not display logic and science); and, according

to Burke, sensibility and judgment constitute taste. Sensibility is not in itself necessarily refined, and may simply discover itself by a coarse undistinguishing proneness to every indulgence, in nothing resembling the enthusiasm of genius. I must here take occasion to express the difference of my opinion from those which have been published within a few years, and which, allowing Shakspeare's unrivalled genius, deny his taste. He has shewn, I think, more good and more bad taste than any one. I cannot think that dramatic author can be condemned for wanting taste, whose works afford more rules than those of any for writing tragedy ; and his judgment is no where more seriously and satisfactorily pointed out, than it is in Mrs. Montagu's essay upon the writings and genius of Shakspeare. I have spoken at large of the faults opposite to those which were the objects of her criticisms ; but it may not be improper to remark here, that whatever advantages ensue from the destruction of one critical prejudice, by any meritorious exertion, it produces the remote danger of falling into the opposite ; and that both before and after the tide of opinion has turned, taste may, in some way or other, be equally obstructed by its tendency.

The censure of *ugliness* is very natural; since, as the simple indulgence of our passions accords with beauty, the simple restraint of them is analogous to this quality. It ought therefore to be guarded against, particularly by those whose disposition inclines them to transgress the laws, and to overlook the claims of justice. Young people, whose animal spirits engage them wholly in the pursuits of pleasure and amusement, and who are not habituated to the rules of conduct formed gradually by experience and reflection, will be apt to shew a propensity to it. Natural defects in the manners of men will immediately catch their attention, and such deformity chiefly will strike them as provokes laughter; which will not even wait for a pretext, but often is called forth by some innocent or inevitable cause, as unintentional peculiarity, or plainness of dress, or an unfavourable character of countenance and figure. On the contrary, people more advanced in life, look less to the person, and his pleasing qualities, than to his system of manners, which they require to be correct, or, in other words, without deformity; passing over, and being insensible, on common occasions, to simply disagreeable ingredients in the composition of men. At a still

more advanced age, we separate fitness still more from beauty, and are proportionably indifferent to ugliness, in looking for what is correct in the whole series of a man's actions, or in what is called his character : we then declaim against the vices of the times, and, without judgment, would carry our laudable indignation against them too far. But we are then happily more callous to the unpleasant effect of natural infirmities, which exemplify ugliness, of the prejudice occasioned by which we should be aware.

I have said that, in the imitative arts, ugliness, where necessary for exact imitation, ought to be tempered by interesting qualities. A paper in the *Idler* seems to me directed against Burke's system ; which, however, solidly in effect, provides for the due operation of every principle in art. That paper must, at the time, have occasioned unjust doubts of the caution and judgment of his philosophy, in warning painters not to attend to the single qualities enumerated by him in analyzing sublimity and beauty ; though his favourable opinion of fitness is repeatedly declared or indicated. An interesting publication, just come out, has taken the same side ;* preferring the opinion of the philosophers of

* Thompson on Taste. A truly learned and ingenious

this century, to that of Bacon and Burke. But it is obvious that the painter must be safely admonished to endeavour at the sublime and beautiful, as long as he is not invited to violate fitness. What then would Burke advise the painter to do, in representing a human figure on canvas? he would bid him consider, that the proportions of men are ascertained gradually, by reason and observation; but that there exist certain principles in nature which alone operate immediately, though they are connected with those things in which they charm, as fire is with fuel; and that the painter has two objects, though habit makes them appear one—to take care that his thoughts are true, and that they are interesting. Thus he would try to affect with properties in forms which always have affected; and if you say he means of course to paint unnaturally, you assume what is not granted, but, on the contrary, has been denied in the clearest language, gentleman has informed me the author was a deep thinking man, who had employed years in composing his work. I may too boldly hazard my opinion, having been hardly above a year in comparing Burke with his opponents, and bringing two works, founded upon it, to the degree of forwardness at which they are: yet a very close and resolute attention to an author, may compensate for deficiencies in explaining his art or science.

though not perhaps with so much precaution and repetition as it would have been, had the general disposition to random cavil been foreseen. Let me instance a case in poetry to illustrate this point. Sophocles and Euripides have been compared together, not only in respect to their different degrees of pathos, but to their different mode of painting manners; one being said to have represented men as they ought to be, and the other as they were. Excellent commentators have interpreted this to mean, that Sophocles' characters were supposed less natural than those of Euripides, as Thompson's are than those of Shakspeare. I would only remark on this, that Burke's view would not certainly be to encourage *this sort* of ideal beauty, but to make the principles he has noticed give distinctness to the features of nature, and to infuse *characteristic* spirit into the figures of a group. I have sometimes wondered that the ideal beauty of the statuaries was not usually exemplified by the difference between history and poetry. There is properly ideal beauty, ideal sublimity, and ideal character; the latter of which is the peculiar study of the statuary, and the others may be said to be a more than common share of the affecting qualities he

properly engrafts upon it: for instance, a man either inanimate, or employed in ordinary pursuits, is an object marked by mediocrity, though he is as *natural* as he can be; but a man wrought up by interesting passions, may be an example of the sublime or beautiful, or both.

The censure of ugliness would therefore be objectionable in a critic, when it induced a poet to think natural defects in the characters of Shakespeare ugly, and to display, in his own, the inaccurate and imaginary perfection of those of Thompson.

The censure of *mediocrity* is sometimes ludicrous, from the vanity which inspires it; as where we have hardly a grain more of ingratiating or energetic qualities, than some person whom we tauntingly consign to ridicule. The effects of natural impatience are either to be excused, or condemned upon another principle; but I am speaking of that busy troublesome spirit, which, from system, is always urging men to do more than either nature or fortune puts in their power, and by that means prevents their being as useful as they were intended to be, and would otherwise have approved themselves. There are animals which, if you would force them

by ill treatment to do some difficult work, will do none at all ; when by kindness and judgment they might have been made very serviceable. It may seem not only vain and foolish, but irreverent and irreligious, in censuring mediocrity, to find fault with a want of sensibility, when natural to a man, and not brought on by a hardening course of vicious conduct ; but where we are most plausible, though most unjust, in attributing to a quiet character the moral defect of a tardy benevolence, we even then, strangely, though fashionably, make the plans he is to execute, more injurious than beneficial, by not allowing them to ripen. As likewise sobriety of judgment often shews like mediocrity, we may, and often do, impede with our censure those very qualities of persons and actions, which, if well understood, would promise most the fruits we are in search of. Tests, accordingly, are established of the utility of a man's life, which are supposed infallible at every moment of it ; though the more important is a man's end, the more time is required for its attainment, and consequently the longer it must be concealed, in spite of those tests. The laws of a country, and the measures of a government, we may easily reduce, in our minds, to a point, and contemplate

not only as a salutary restraint, but an inconsiderable deduction from liberty of opinion. But the infinite number of those who would have their will a law, renders an insufferable tyranny, any plan of forcing men into pursuits according with our prejudices; especially as enthusiasts, who are most inclined to do so, and are themselves admirably employed in the manner they approve, have the least opportunity for that reflection necessary to form judgments of others. They are therefore capable of being prejudiced against them. But mediocrity ought the less to be overlooked, as, having no effect upon the passions, it naturally indisposes us to do it justice; and encourages mean and unmanly habits of discountenancing good qualities, because they want the interest of great ones. If we examine vice, we may find it often acting upon the passions by the principle of *infinity*, and delighting, because it removes the boundary of right and wrong; from which Burke may shew us we are too naturally averse, There is likewise another species of terror by which it operates, produced by the dangers society experience from the unprincipled; and if those dangers only affect society at large, or our neighbours, and we may, without scandal, shew ourselves indifferent

to them, we are apt to feel our pleasures heightened by their "glowing guilt," but in proportion to our weakness; and the weakest of all are the most sensible to their effect. But it is unworthy of the grave philosopher to give way to this *seduction*, and pronounce accordingly a biassed opinion upon the claims of individuals. I do not say that active, does not submit to a boundary like passive virtue, otherwise it would not be virtue; but its energy and impression upon society give it much of the attraction of infinity; and if we are always ready with the greater reward due to it, and never with the smaller one due to the other quality, we may appear not wholly proof by nature against seduction. But the man of sense, who makes a point of judging coolly of whatever concerns the community, will be apprehensive lest his own passions should represent to him mediocrity as contemptible. He will, for instance, remember, that a government may be the best that ever existed, and yet not be always producing wonders of itself to fill the minds, and gratify the passions of all; which seems to be required by the democratic and revolutionary friends of novelty. He will not, either by a boisterous encouragement of science, frighten her out of her senses, or oppress

her faculties, while he is urging every one to the perpetual discussion of contested points,

And talk about it, Goddess, and about it.

He may be a declared friend to philosophy, and its cause, abstractedly considered ; because justice, a still better thing than science, would be offended by a persecution of those few, who, with *sterling* patience and penetration, cultivate philosophy, supposing it esteemed criminal ; and because they would be the more pitiable, as their disappointed labours, unacknowledged merits, and the exclusive disgrace of congenial pursuits they must lament, “ unpitied and alone,” could never, like disease and poverty, excite commiseration. Yet were it not for injustice, so impossible it is to hinder the press, in these days, from diffusing knowledge, that mankind might be considered by him most likely to grow wise by favouring a disposition to oppose the progress of science, and extend ignorance ; since false science is so peculiarly prolific of ignorance. For it was not by continued discussion, by queries put, and errors rectified, that Newton, whose merits have been of late most strangely dissembled by a foreigner, was able to bequeath to

posterity all his discoveries ; but by the prosecution of a train of thought, to which he only was equal, with the help of study and retirement.

At any rate the man of sense will chuse mediocrity, when there is nothing better ; for then it is only truth and nature. In literature, he will allow that

One science only will one genius fit ;

yet he will cautiously both encourage *novelty*, and teach *fitness*, by laying down rules for originality. The original writer, according to some, cultivates a particular sort of composition, neglecting every other ; and the good sense of the ancients, who used to adhere to this method, is sometimes boasted in delivering this opinion. But he may consider a good deal of this difference between the ancients and moderns, as the effect of the art of printing, and long civilization on literature ; owing to which, both the temptation, and the facility of changing our style of writing, is encreased, by the general respect, and easy attainment, of knowledge. Sometimes different compositions of the same author, as they may be traced up to one common principle, so may they discover sufficient unity in his exertions,

to one like him, not led away by appearances. Besides, an approach to universality, at the beginning of a writer's life, may seem to him justifiable, as an experiment to find out his strength. Had the physician, mentioned in Boileau's *Art Poétique*, possessed a universal turn, he might have made an earlier discovery of his talents for architecture, and put fewer patients to death.

He will disapprove of *sublimity* and *beauty*, as particularly hostile to just mediocrity, in a picture or a poem, when it does not happen that

Shades more sweetly recommend the light,
and

Modest plainness sets off sprightly wit.

And they do not so much then err against fitness, or exhibit deformity; since they can

Hide with ornaments their want of *art*.

He will disapprove of the contempt of mediocrity, instanced by that systematic and intolerant adherence to dramatic *defect and deformity*, which will not only constantly deny merit, where they are not, but suppose it must be, where they are; and which is always announcing genius in prologues

upon the stage, as necessarily following the outrageous breach of Aristotle's rules, when no genius, alas! appears during thirty or forty years; and what is stranger, the public continues expecting it always for the same reason.

Lastly, he will disapprove of it, in such poetry as I have spoken of under the head of *ugliness*; since bad poets have had recourse to a harshness of versification, and a spiritless abruptness of manner, not only from supposing beauty too inanimate, but mediocrity too unaspiring.

I have now completed both my survey of Burke's philosophy, and my separate consideration of all the various parts of his system, as applicable respectively to various parts of taste and morals; to do which, was to throw light on them equally in the way he recommended; since it was to "examine every ingredient in the composition, one by one," and enabled us, in every instance, "to compare our subject with things of a similar nature, and even things of a contrary nature." It also tended to banish prejudice from human opinion, by giving separate importance to the contrasted principles which operate in nature, and which not being allowed, by vice or enthusiasm, to operate as they

were intended to do, by enjoying nearly equal rank in the estimation of the world, the affairs of men must be ever foolishly and dangerously conducted. One of these principles is certainly of more importance than the rest; and reason, which teaches us our duties, must on that account be allowed a superiority over passion. As likewise the love of pleasure is so violent and universal, it will be always safer for those whose judgments are not peculiarly relied upon *by others, as well as themselves*, rather to encourage every disposition they feel to propriety, than look upon indulgence as the principal consideration, merely because pleasures *may* be innocent. It requires judgment, neither perfectly attainable, either by states or by individuals, to produce the greatest good, by giving the passions their full swing, and strictly observing the rules prescribed by religion and morality; and if they do transgress them, they will be injurious, in proportion as they were expected to be serviceable. If the passions are allowed by us as likely to prevent the corruptions of reason, as reason is those of passion, we should suffer injustice in the imputation of hypocrisy, for reinforcing the champions of duty who contend with deeds, and not words; and thus securing to their

cause that judicious preference, it has the fairest claim to. Yet as this preference should be judicious, so those leaders of their bands, and those counsellors on whom they rely, should be persons of the rarest judgment, or the greatest respect for it, lest the excesses of honest zeal should convert a sacred war into a crusade.

It will be collected from my single assertion, that every one is the representative, in the world, of his own way of thinking; that I would not confound a balance of principles, where each ought to be energetically supported, with the labours of that wavering candour and moderation, of which the character is indecision. Indeed this apparently conciliatory spirit is as much a corruption of reason, as a narrow prejudice against the passions. But the way to maintain the balance recommended, is to follow nature; that is, obey our feelings, unawed by the popularity of any temporary system of thinking, and yet be preserved from the errors they may tempt us to, by the religious principles in which we are educated. The German professor I have quoted, has not only exemplified some of the qualities of things I have described by different dispositions of men, but by different characters of religion: I shall, in like manner, now suggest the resemblance between

the union of all these qualities, and the union of opposite characters in the religion of the Church of England; for in this alone, as in the British government, an equal respect is evinced for opposite varieties of human opinion. It unites what is great and beautiful in that of the Roman Catholics, with what is rational in that of the Dissenters; and of this circumstance the High and Low Church principles are a proof; of which the one leans more to the former, and the other to the latter. I infer, therefore, that it is the religion most calculated to preserve a balance, and best adapted to the nature of man.

The particular principles of human conduct that best would co-operate with any religion or government whatever, to preserve this balance, must be those, which inspiring a rational love of demonstrative certainty, secure to judgment that quiet, without which it must be mischievously precipitate. As philosophy has been indebted for her existence to this country, and its present ministry, and it is not she, but one who takes her name, that justifies ingratitude, there is every reason why she should preferably instance such of those particular principles, as relate to politics.

What then are the political errors which have

prevented human affairs, for several years, from proceeding in a quiet and orderly manner, may be collected from the soundest writers of the present day. It appears to them, that Locke's notions of government have had too much favour, and generated a great deal worse, producing systems fraught with danger, neighbouring or remote, to every country. Our great modern luminary has convinced them it is as improper to prefer theory to experience in one branch of science, as Bacon shewed it was in others. It is allowed by them, that political liberty, *in the abstract*, is desirable to mankind; and they suppose that every monarch, in every age, allowed it, whose actions have not proved him a tyrant, unless he has *himself* expressed a contrary opinion. Yet they conceive that abstract notions which set any bounds to the increase, possibly advantageous, either of power or liberty, hang like a dead weight upon the science of politics. However, they are not so sceptical, in matters of government, as not to look to some middle point between two extremes, as in almost every case preferable to them, and there point out, to legislators, the principles of the British constitution; but with an admonition, not to apply them where they can endanger established government;

and the habits of men are not prepared for their operation in a country. For they think even the British constitution, as it existed at the Revolution, was better adapted to those times, than the present, and is only not considered in the latter view, to be sunk to a level with some republic wholly new, of the Abbé Syeyes; since such a sudden modification of our monarchy might resemble the late establishment in France of a *royal democracy*, and become the prelude to a system of continued anarchy. These sentiments they value not as those of a Tory, though one of a set of men often highly useful to established government, and once owned by Fletcher of Salton, the famous Republican, to be the honestest of the state; but of an old Whig, in my opinion, the most strictly constitutional of any adherent of a party. Such a character, like a sensible man, revolves plans in his mind, for the benefit of his fellow-creatures, and, like a true Englishman, has a decided bias to liberty; but he does not let his thoughts escape in specious maxims, on all occasions, which, by the imperfection of language, are understood by every person in a different sense, and create a confusion, that renders all his designs impracticable. I do not suppose him wanting resolution to burst the

barriers of prejudice. The same strength of mind that makes him disinclined to innovation, will enable him to project great schemes, attended with some change, at critical periods; but he will not vainly boast the universal facility of political experiments; nay he will, on the contrary, value himself upon doing the least harm possible, and may seize the opportunity of attributing his success to Providence. He will have as much faith in the propriety of measures he perceives full reason to adopt, as if he could foresee their favourable issue; but if any appear to him in a questionable shape, he will turn them on every side, and cherish every particle of doubt he may entertain upon their score.* Yet this is not continually to admit new principles as the basis of new measures, and to heap Pelion upon Ossa, in the enterprize of theory; so that the humble field

* This was done, in one late instance, by the venerable Mr. Bryant. There may exist various opinions on the reality of the siege of Troy; but to examine the truth of an ordinary fact which has hardly been contested, was not the same thing as to revive disputes on the most serious of questions, in which the greatest abilities of the time, for centuries, could produce nothing new. Whoever reflects upon the philosophical systems now in vogue, will apprehend the same danger to mankind from universal credulity, and from universal scepticism.

of experience should be perpetually kept out of sight, and every avenue to it choked up and made impassable. The new Whig, however, declaims against the old Whig, for his pious forbearance. His wish, that both heaven and earth should be preserved from confusion and assault, is mistaken by the deluded allies of the modern Titans. With all due deference, however, to their acknowledged excellences, he will dissent from their opinions, in several particulars. He will not easily conceive it possible to shew, from analogical reasoning, that the people ought to be what is called equally represented in Parliament; and though it should be maintained that this is not recommended for the beauty of the theory, but with a view to substantial good, yet as experience is not made the guide to that substantial good, it will not be less a mere theory for its being considered otherwise. Political knowledge is certainly the most valuable of all similar kinds of acquisition; but for that very reason we ought to ascertain precisely what it is; and we may find, that much of what has made Englishmen, during many years, decry and appear to hate their country, as well as extol its most determined enemies, is no more political, than the jargon of the

schools before Bacon's time was philosophical, knowledge. Yet there may certainly have been men, and, for theorists, great and good ones, who look upon the opinions I avow as stale prejudices: they may, for instance, hazard the general assertion, that *a republic is the best form of government*. This is more excusable for one living under a republic, as in the United States; where it is natural for a strong leaning to that form to be by every means encouraged. But the American *philosopher* professes to consider mankind at large, and ought to discover, in his opinion, a consciousness of our bounded powers, and a persuasion, that whatever government accords best with the habits and situation of a people, is the most eligible, whether it be a monarchy, or a republic. Disputes concerning forms of government, and other abstract questions, have not been dangerous prior to the gradual alteration of society, by which principles, till then comparatively idle, and looked upon more as figures of speech, than rules of conduct,* began to influence

* Under tyrants; nay, whom they flattered, both ancient and modern satirists have declaimed upon *true nobility*; but knowing themselves secure from the interpretation of revolutionists.

it in a most sensible manner. But it is now so much the more advisable to ascertain their validity, as the philosophical systems published in this century, one of which has probably been made very operative, obtain less credit than they possessed some years ago ; * and since our political, must be founded on our philosophical notions, it may be possible for the new Whig to discover, that he has, in imitation of his scientific monitor, too hastily made up his mind, and recommended others to do so, on certain points.

Another prejudice occasions persons to consider our universities as too monkish in their origin, and ill calculated for the education of young men. It is to be hoped, any errors they may fall into will be rectified ; but this country, and Europe, have been indebted to them at least for forming statesmen, who have united afterwards in life, to vanquish an armada, and check the growth of

* The reverend publisher of Hartley's works is less likely to be carried out of his course, by every gale, as it arises, of philosophical fancy, than, from an enterprizing spirit, and a consciousness of dexterity to spread his sail deliberately, and carry his companions with him, *letbi discrimine parvo*, among the more dangerous rocks and quicksands.

tyranny and superstition. It is no new thing for patriots to fancy, that mankind are about to turn over a fresh leaf, in consequence of the changes they themselves project or produce. In the struggles between order and liberty, individuals will appear on both sides of the question worthy of being remembered, and the world too should be considered as imperceptibly improving, though with a chance ultimately of rather a sensible, than of a visible change. But it is pernicious, through enthusiasm, to rate political men and measures so high, that they should be allowed of authority, to prevent plain persons of sound understanding, from regulating government and education by their own experience, and force them to build upon another's theory, however noted may be his character. Any ministry, or set of men, are liable to err ; but it is an admirable distinction which Burke makes, when he says of careful enquiry, " if it does not preserve us from error, it may at least from a spirit of error." It is this " spirit of error" which is the fault of the times ; and we know very well to what persons the desire is imputable, of improving the world upon abstract principles.

Jacobinism is the poisonous quintessence of the

unwholesome opinions I have been describing. It is a mixture, the properties of which are enough known; but which is proved, by several late doubts of its existence, not enough distinguishable in appearance, from what is harmless, to be itself a warning to us to avoid it; and on that account it seems to me, government has fresh reason earnestly to take measures for its removal. The Jacobin does not only deviate from nature, but know and avow his deviation from it. The ties of kindred are to him matters of small moment, while, puffed up by what he fancies his enlarged conception of things, he looks with contempt upon that weakness which depends on religion, and friendly offices, for its comfort. He imagines the *perfectibility* of the human species, must recommend desperate attempts to meliorate society by the subversion of every established government, and by a universal change in systems of education, and principles of conduct. Accordingly, he relies much on the foreign philosophers, I have already spoken of, particularly the most daring; for some are plausible enough frequently to make the new Whig augur happiness to mankind from the general dissemination of their opinions, whatever peculiarity he may condemn in

a few. Both of them are too apt to consider general improvement as a necessary consequence of general change; and to justify the memorable league of foreign literati against the civil and ecclesiastical establishments of Europe. Nothing however, can be more contemptible than the self-sufficiency of a collection of students and academicians, presuming to sneer at, and write down, the systems espoused, and usefully maintained, by statesmen of perhaps more natural abilities than themselves; and dreaming they shall at any time be able to put an end to the evil, which may result from their overthrow.

It would have been far better that the popular talents of the world, should have been judiciously divided between the parties of those in power on the one hand, and of their opponents, on the other. On each side, they might have been occupied in forwarding the views of their party; yet whatever occasional correspondence they might have judged proper for the good of all, it would have become them to indulge no mean propensity to cling together, and to flatter one another. It is true, the numbers should not have been equally divided, as one cause had more native strength than the other.

This will appear from a comparison of liberty and order, the objects of the two parties. Liberty animates with ideas of the indulgence of the passions, of the dignity of man, and of the honours of patriotism; and the imagination naturally kindles with it; but order is wholly conversant about propriety; it calls our attention to the dull restraints of duty; and, as Burke will shew, exercises only the judgment. But if, before the existence of the hydra of Jacobinism, it would have been salutary for the world that the party of order should be strengthened, now, when it has grown so mischievous, we may at least affirm that many more of the sturdiest ought to rank in it; nor ought they to cease from offering their services, till the accursed monster, so apt to deceive with apparent defeat, is judged by every human being to have met its fate. I say this, in spite of the inferior literary genius by which the opposition to existing establishments is now supported. Seconded by the poets and novellists of illuminism, Buonaparte finds himself again able to take the field, and will do much harm by their dangerous, though not imposing, talents, and by those of politicians resembling them. It is little compliment to him to say that he outshines them; but I have not been persuaded

by the most splendid eloquence, and the finest talents, that there is any thing in his lawless career, from which to expect the dignity of the original character of Cromwell. He indeed has missed the opportunity of being more truly great than either his modern or his ancient prototype. Favoured by the dangerous opinion, which still obtains, that the philosophers of this century were destined to form a new era, an opinion which, unless eradicated from the minds of men, will perpetuate error and misery, by making the means of national improvement more attended to, than the end, and restraining any propensity to the encouragement of morals, from an idea that it will happen of itself, as a consequence of laws, which are in the way of being made so excellent; he steadily perseveres in his ill-judged conduct. The beloved Utopia, which has been so long inflaming the imagination of millions, cannot be at once forgotten; and he countenances every vain attempt to give it existence. The illustrious House of Bourbon, enriched by adversity, has not, therefore, commanded his respect. He has not seen the interest of Europe in the right point of view, if he has looked for it. This I say, as one who had always entertained the opinion I express; for I think it far

from improper that I should take the opportunity of avowing myself to have been originally *an enemy to the French revolution*; one who preferred Montesquieu's scheme of perfecting laws, to Voltaire's of *making a bonfire* of them.*

The generous man, when his judgment permits him, will let his feelings too operate; he will compare the almost forgotten downfall of an ancient royal family, whose domination had lasted for centuries, with the trumpeted mock-majesty of demagogues, who acquire the character of patriots and heroes, on the easy terms of receiving, or at worst of resigning, power, which education had not taught them to rely upon, like the others; in whom, however, it is only demonstrable to the theorist that it has instilled unsalutary prejudices. Indeed it will be acknowledged by all, not only in this country, but in France, that many a one who has figured there of late years has seemed a mere political mountebank, or more nearly resembled a French dancer, by his grimace of importance, in a furious strut across the opera stage. No man of feeling, at least, will choose the unfortunate as the object of his insults; nor affect to maintain that it is the stricken deer that gores and tyrannizes!

Dict. Philosophique.

and ought not therefore to be permitted to weep unmolested over his sufferings, but be roused, on the contrary, from the distant thicket, and hunted down to satiate its sanguinary pursuers. Let us then hope that, on every account, from motives of generous pity, as well as regard for the peace of Europe, the usurper will be opposed with all the enthusiasm it promises, in every one of his illegal enterprizes; and be utterly unable to conceal from any man, what is so well known to the wisest of this nation, that more than is generally conceived depends upon the complete failure of his projects. Though his situation appears more plausible than that of his predecessors in the French government, let us recollect, that great schemes of change have been long secretly in agitation throughout Europe, and that he is the voluntary and chosen instrument of the revolutionary maniacs. We may fairly ridicule the burlesque appearance given by him to the fashionable admiration of French liberty; but let us not allow him the same credit for it, as he would have acquired by the restoration of the French sceptre to its rightful owner. However modest some fancy his demands, we may be assured he is applying for a space of ground to build upon, within

the bounds of which, artfully measured, a city and arsenal of Jacobinism may arise, ample enough to give laws gradually to the inhabitants of every shore, and to extend their dominion, not only over the dastardly race which can submit to their degrading power, but over the sons of them, and the sons of their sons. Let us not permit the bloody rapacious colonists to rest on terra firma which we share, merely because they are no longer professed savages, and hypocritically exhibit a Christian demeanour.

Having thus concluded not only my survey of Burke's idea of nature, but all the observations I had to make upon them, I shall only add, that before any one hastily and loudly condemns it, he should be quite sure that he possesses taste and sensibility enough, thoroughly to feel, and appreciate all the distinctions made by it. Even that superlative metaphysician Locke, as he has been thought by many too fond of an equal proportion between every representative of a borough or county, and his constituents, and who certainly was unsuccessful as the legislator of a province in America, may also have shewn himself, by his approbation of Blackmore's poetry, possessed of taste clearly

incommensurate to that which is so manifestly proved by the essay on the sublime and beautiful, where some of his opinions are contested. I own that reason and reflection, however unaided by brighter qualities, have persuaded me, that this essay is peculiarly calculated at once to save taste from the encroachments of affected virtue, and virtue from those of affected taste. There are some who allow its author's ability, but would fain prohibit, as dangerous, the perusal of his works. These persons seem to me to *quarrel with their own food*, in wishing the classical writings of Burke forgotten; nor would they more in rejoicing, from like motives of modern philanthropy, that the essays, orations, and other works of Cicero, which the scholar regrets, are lost. As to those fashionable critics, who lay such stress on a clearness that explains the most profound thoughts to the dullest reader, and would exchange for that quality in Burke's treatise his caution, depth, and originality, I shall only remark that there is no disputing about tastes. If they would see that quality worthy of the admiration they lavish on it, they should contemplate it in extemporaneous productions, especially in orations, in which the most complicated subject is explained, in all its parts,

and with unexampled judgment, to the astonished hearer. It is, indeed, rather a rhetorical, than a philosophical quality.

How far I have succeeded in the execution of my design, and whether I may deserve the slightest praise beyond that of communicating plain truth to the public, is not very material. The observations already made on my deficiencies, and the decisive effect they have had on the public opinion, and consequently on the success of my former writings, will perhaps, even for such deficiencies, entitle me to rank with those who, as we have seen, excite the indignation of philosophers; persons whose plain judgment unobstructed by dazzling powers, can more surely discern who ought to be entrusted with the government of the world. That a *rich* wreck of property, too, in these *days of nature*, should suffer and even cause a real discouragement, from which the want of any allows an exemption, in praise, would be very conceivable to many, whatever it proved to the generality of people.

However, with so sincere a desire of being serviceable, have I expressed my opinions in the present work, that I can truly say, though I could never have insinuated a retraction of acknowledge-

ments for any notice of me that has been obviously favourable or well-intended, (especially as I did not ever defend myself as possessing material merit,* but as not singularly misusing time) that literary fame, in the *honourable mention* of authors, can never in future be to me an object; nor do I desire it. *Non eadem est mens, non animus*. However, in the ardour of an early age, I might have pressed forward to gain the palm with fair labour, sufficient to acquit me of presumption, I have no temptation at present to be importunate for it. Yet as publication somewhat enlarges the bounds of literary amusement, I am as little, I own, inclined to cut myself off from the means of repeating my experiments a short time longer; and with a view to it, I trust I need not occasionally despair of the cold, but impartial notice of the *attentive* critic,

* The most boastful words used by me to invite criticism, were in a motto from Lucretius, which might have been fairly assumed by the inventor of a very trivial discovery recorded in the Repertory of Arts. Yet I cannot flatter some *geniuses* who are on the watch for concessions like mine, that any difference must follow from it. *In the relations between us* I shall not be, like those good gentlemen, among the *geniuses*, but we may still sink socially in the scale together.

whose co-operation is necessary to experiment.— That literature is no more gratifying to me than applause, I could not assert, and speak the truth. Indeed the allusions made in my different publications sufficiently prove the contrary; though should a disposition to *pore* be imputed to me, it may be recollected, that the same attention which appears fulsome towards strangers, is esteemed highly praiseworthy towards friends and benefactors; and such I truly may have found those companions, whose sayings I store up and apply. Indeed none more can deserve the title. My books have been endeared to me by every recommendation, ideal as well as real; having been my best resource in youth, when forced by a reverse of fortune to live upon a little, and, during later periods, while I have enjoyed competence and affluence; and having shared my danger from a shipwreck, and a fire in the middle of the Atlantic. Though I shall not think it inconsistent with any thing I have said, to defend such opinions of mine as may be misinterpreted, or to repel unjustifiable accusations, I look forward, in publication, only to those pleasures, which I have found so abundant, though so necessary; unless it is to the grain of public advantage, which even my

industry may contribute. For, however little military enthusiasm, I may feel awakened by “the spirit-stirring drum, and the shrill fife” of literature, on any occasion, I am as sincerely as ever, though more calmly interested, and pray with unabated fervour, for the success of holy arms. I trust, whenever I exert myself, it will be to tender what assistance is in my power to the cause I think too feeble; nor can I be more directly employed in the support of it, than, as at present, by illustrating a system of philosophy, which endeavours to teach what every man, as he grows older, becomes more confirmed in his persuasion of, that “THE MORE ACCURATELY WE SEARCH INTO THE HUMAN MIND, THE STRONGER TRACES WE EVERY WHERE FIND OF HIS WISDOM WHO MADE IT.”*

* Burke—Sublime and Beautiful.

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APPENDIX.

NOTE I.

A NOTE may be here allowable, not on my own account, but that of a father, through life of strictly moral and religious character; whose activity may have rendered him a chief object of the party imputations, which represented a falling off of virtue in the family of the respected founder of the colony. At a time when the sounds of triumph over it were yet ringing in all ears they reached, we perceive the reason why the author of a life of Franklin, in the Biographical Dictionary, should describe their proceedings by expressions which might have been well delayed till impartial history had discovered the merits and failings of both parties. The description of them in other places, with regard to payment of taxes is misrepresentation, or exaggeration, in all the books of history, geography, and travels, which have adopted the sentiments of the opposite party, down to the two quarto volumes of a French emigrant. Let any one imagine the sons of the purchaser of Pennsylvania, at first gentlemen of moderate

circumstances, and after the industry and frugality of half a century, not opulent ones, accused of objecting to be liable, possibly, to claims for ready money, in payment of taxes for a demesne as large as England. Yet when they possessed competence, the taxes claimed were commuted for a sum, received as sufficient, and which, from what they could annually afford to spend, I should judge equivalent to our income tax, and as much added to it in a voluntary contribution. Foster, therefore, in the preface to his translation of Kalm's Travels in America, justly blunts the edge of similar reflections on the family, by observing, with regard to him, that, "a philosopher should examine such accounts, hear both parties, and emancipate himself from narrowness of mind and prejudice."

NOTE II.

I have perhaps proceeded too far in this reasoning for any but the metaphysician, and not far enough for him: I shall therefore in this note continue the subject. Intricacy is essentially nothing more than infinity, which has been ranked by Burke among the qualities productive of the sublime, in saying, that by it "the imagination is entertained with the promise of something more, and does not acquiesce in the present object of the sense;" as also, where the sublime is alone considered, that "the eye not being

able to perceive the bounds of many things, they seem to be infinite, and they produce the same effects as if they were really so." In this manner the same sentiment is raised, that Mr. Price attributes to intricacy, and to the picturesque, and calls curiosity. All the instances of the picturesque, such as that of picturesque manners, at the end of the essay, appear to me as much allied to what is *most commonly* called sublime, as respect is to astonishment. Let us imagine a picture of Salvator Rosa, representing a rocky mountainous scene, where a great deal of wild brushwood, either hangs down from the edge of precipices, or stretches irregularly along places on which soil grows; yet not so as to prevent the eye from being attracted by the smooth and verdant ground, here and there contrasting, though agreeably, with the other features of the landscape. I believe it will be thought that the contrast extends no further; but that the wildness of the overgrown spots, no less than the magnitude and elevation of the hills; increases the savage grandeur of the place, while it is the grassy part alone which gives relief to it by opposition. With respect to the use of the term picturesque, I will observe, that it may either, as the public determines, signify one species of the sublime (in Burke's sense of that word) supposing it resolved that they should all receive names, or may continue to preserve its old meaning, and convey, as in Mr. Gilpin's writings, the

idea of such a mixed assemblage of natural objects as would please upon the principle of painting. Dr. Priestley does not consider terror as a source of the sublime; which, in his opinion, is characterised by *an awful stillness*; and though I think the passage of Homer, last referred to by Mr. Price, sufficiently proves terror, as he intends it should, an *obvious* cause of the sublime, yet these different ways of seeing the same thing may be an inducement to notice, and to distinguish its most dissimilar properties. But a philosopher who explains his terms, and even makes excuses for them, if imperfect from the nature of language, has a right to be understood in his own sense, provided his ideas are clear. The want of a persuasion of this has set the opinions of Burke and many of his readers at variance. It has too been objected by some, that simple terror is purely disagreeable, and destitute of any power of elevating the mind. But the objects of *taste*, either in the plain or metaphorical sense of the word, may be delightful, and yet their ingredients, when analysed, quite the reverse. From a like error Gibbon forms a wrong estimate of the cause to which the sublime is attributed. He erroneously represents Burke, who echoes Longinus's opinion of the swelling sentiments produced by the sublime, as maintaining an opposite one, because he speaks in another place, of the depression of mind it causes. But to allow both these effects of it, is no more

inconsistent than to acknowledge, that a sublime passage which presents painful images to us, may communicate delight.

There is not a more striking proof of the power inherent in the principles Burke shews to be ingredients of the sublime, than the effect of a series of stupid actions, by which an audience, particularly a gallery, are so enchanted, because they cannot look beyond those principles into the texture of the work. But that power, on the other hand, is a proof that their judgment is good, as far as it goes. *Vid. Introduction on Taste.* The affinity between terror and the sublime, will appear from the terror which persons of delicate nerves, or peculiarly constructed, have felt at the sight of the sea, or objects of extraordinary magnitude.

Upon the whole, it surely must appear, that whenever the character of an object of our senses is *spirit* and it does not sooth, but in some degree irritate, as in the picturesque, the idea of pain is uppermost, and it falls within the limits of the sublime. It produces *delight*, as beauty does *pleasure*; for what intermediate sentiment remains? If indeed we look in De Bure, or any bookseller's catalogue, we shall observe the frequent difficulty of precise classification, and own it was never got over so well as by Burke. The sublime is, according to him, a peculiar quality having an effect, especially where strongly characterised, which may perhaps be described in

the same manner as the sublime remarks and sentences of an ancient lyric poet were by Bacon, and be said to strike the mind suddenly as by a divine rod. On the contrary, Longinus does not distinguish between effects; and what he calls the sublime, might be well denominated genius, as having, in the examples he produces, every kind of character. An examination of the Ode of Sappho might furnish a proof of this; but would require more time than can be at present spared. The sublime of Burke is that which would be pain, or upon a comprehensive view of things would seem allied to it, but for the removal of perhaps a single idea or two, which totally alters its nature.

But a familiar example may explain this satisfactorily: suppose, then, a party are met to enjoy themselves, with one unpleasant person in company, whose manner has not only those *ugly* breaks, or pauses, which prevent him from perfectly assimilating with the rest, but is aggravated by a loudness of voice, and a liberty of gesture, that, raising a species of terror, exemplifies the *false sublime*. We will imagine him to go away, and the rest of the company to be maintaining such an agreeable conversation as they expected, lively and cheerful, but supported with ordinary spirits, and the *beauty* and mild character allied to them. We will now suppose as agreeable a person as they, with a very lively turn, to drop in. If any of them is unacquainted

with him, he may infer from the same loudness of voice, and liberty of gesture, as the man who left them, that he resembles him. He however does not; as in him the terror is, in a due degree, removed and modified. The painful idea of interruption will arise even in the minds of those who understand him, but it will be converted into a source of delight.

NOTE III.

The distinction between beauty and fitness is to be found slightly dwelt upon, in the *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, by Voltaire and others; but it was reserved for Burke to prove this by his noble and original system. One of the last works in which they were considered synonymous, is Mr. Alison's *on taste*; where he reckons fitness a species of beauty. It has been wondered why attempts should be made to distinguish qualities, both of them agreeing in the satisfaction they afford us. But science is generally interested in explaining things which are different in their nature; and it is impossible to know what errors, and indeed what dangers we may fall into, by neglecting to pursue an inquiry which is not hopeless, and is, notwithstanding secure. Mr. Alison's is an able metaphysical work, and seems to me indeed *unique*, as a copious catalogue of effects of association. Burke uses the expressions

delight and *pleasure*, to indicate the two opposite effects of the sublime and beautiful, taking in every idea, whether received from the senses or the memory. In Mr. Alison's work, *pleasure* signifies the affection produced by the ideas of sensation; and *delight*, whatever arises from the exercise of the imagination, or ideas of emotion, whether sublime or beautiful, which are explained by resorting, though rationally, to the principle of association. But that there exist two principles of an opposite nature, analogous to different tones of the mind, by which works of fancy produce their chief effects, is a curious as well as an indisputable circumstance; while it is by no means an easy task to demonstrate, how far taste depends upon association. There is always danger, in the attempt, that some association nearer to the idea of sensation, which was rejected, should be found, as was done by Burke in criticising Locke's opinion. Part IV. Sect. xiv. For instance, the colour of green is said to sooth us by its pastoral and rural character. But may it not likewise, by the repose it affords to the eye, in comparison of other colours seen or considered with it? Mr. Alison does not deny its being in itself agreeable; and therefore it may confessedly fall under the head of beauty in Burke's Treatise. He allows that gradual variation in music produces a mechanical pleasure: it draws the mind on free from surprise or alarm, and is of course allied to such music

expressive of the passions, as is called beautiful. The same general objections might be extended to the observations on forms, though I cannot doubt Burke would allow the force of some of the associations referred to, if considered as often operating conjointly with others. I fear it is not for the interest of the fine arts, in these days of innovation, that we should blame or neglect at will any component part of an object of taste. Caprice, encouraged to retrench even needless variations in a tune, may omit a note indispensable to its harmony. None but a prejudiced painter will let such a disposition of objects, or such a tone of colouring first meet the eye, in a picture, as will disincline it from dwelling upon the excellent drawing it displays. None either but a prejudiced poet will deny the ear the effect of versification, from an idea that verse is not essential to poetry; though some critics appear to think that to excel in versification was praiseworthy at the beginning of the century, when the thought was a new one; but that at present it possesses no claim to approbation, for a contrary reason. It however seems to me, when harmonizing with sublime or beautiful thoughts, to partake of their nature, and almost double the excellence of poetry. A disposition to depart still farther from ideas of sensation, might indispose us from relishing even style and composition, and make us vulgarly insensible to any thing but the most prominent actions of men

described by them, or the hereditary ideas of poetry; in classical allusions to Muses, Naids, and Dryads, and in Gothic ones to fairies and enchantment, or to feats of baronial valour. It is in proportion to the weakness of the critic's imagination, that his mind is incapable of closing, as it were, with ideas of sensation, or those bordering on them, and too obtuse to receive an impression from any but the most palpable train of thought suggested by a beautiful passage. We may conceive a fine Etruscan vase delighting many a profound scholar by nothing except its connection with the history of ancient Greece (a less remote idea than this having no charms for him,) and the citizen and his wife, for the same reason that their picturesque villa does, because moulded agreeably to fashion. But this theoretic age even sets the ideas of *emotion* in works of fancy, at variance with one another. The different parts of them have different partizans, who entertain prejudices against the rest. Because design in a work ought not to preponderate over sentiment, our modern plays, original or translated, often attempt to move the passions by the most absurd neglect of art; and because we may go a great way, and yet nominally adhere to *nature*, improbability is not condemned in incidents, to which similar ones may be found in human life; though whatever interest is in this manner produced, must give way occasionally to maxims of suspicious

morality. But we have not been quite destitute of religious poets, who, like Milton, could blend instruction with delight, by an ease and freedom of composition, and make all the parts of their variegated web assistant to each other's effect. Could I be prejudiced against any quality of a literary work, which abstract reasoning could speciously approve of, it would be the utmost unity in the drama, when no more time is supposed to elapse in a piece, than really does during its representation at the theatre. There are many who, wanting time and patience to submit to the task required, would write the worse for it. But any part of a work may, in a great writer's hands, give the tone to the whole; and I cannot maintain that a rule is universal, when it is not, after the highest authorities. I shall venture to appeal to the taste of Mr. Alison against his decision on the identity of beauty and fitness. He is not a writer to feel little difference between the two qualities, as they are distinguished by Burke; and will not at least, I think, be surprised, on reconsidering his observations, if there should be some who think fitness not a distinct species of beauty, but as remote in its nature from beauty, as it is from sublimity.

NOTE IV.

It was at the time when theory was most acceptable and most dangerous, that the Battle of Eddington

was written, with labour destined to be lost. The critics have constantly considered it in that point of view in which they were desired not to consider it, as an ordinary attempt at tragedy; and have resolutely confined themselves to forming and insinuating their opinions of my inequality to it. But whatever that inequality, it ought not to be inferred from a work which I *do not allow to be such a trial of it*. All rules have their exceptions, and it was justifiable in me, *for once*, to attend less to the correct representation of passions and manners, in order to produce *the only* tragedy which should strictly preserve the unities, and at the same time be replete with action. To execute such a design, after having been the first to conceive it, was perhaps as great a *labour* as to compose two tragedies with the propriety that was expected. But this was something new, it was said, yet nothing valuable. Now I will put a case to the Critical Reviewer who observes this. Suppose some really great man were to demonstrate to every individual, that *a reform in Parliament* was as little necessary, as I have shewn a prohibition of the dramatic unities to be: would not this be an important circumstance? I do not affirm that the two cases are equally interesting, only they resemble one another in this, that to attribute want of theatrical attraction to the unities, was theoretic, and has been proved by me erroneous; and that to suppose reform indispensable to public prosperity

is theoretic, and may be proved by abler persons erroneous likewise. For I will not insist here on the superiority of any demonstrable truth, however unimportant, to the most boastful theory that is false. This may be a notion peculiar to a party which prefers the sober philosophers of the last, to the dashing system-makers of the present century. But it seems I dwell too long for the critic upon the subject of my tragedy. I am as unwilling as he can be, to harp always, for my own sake, upon the same string. Let him then proceed through the region of "mediocrity" which he complains of; but if I am at present crying to him "*guarda è passa*," and pointing to new objects, I should not be considered as any longer pertinaciously hoping to detain him in the same place. I will only farther observe, upon the subject of my tragedy, that it has the boast of particularly exemplifying Burke's essay on the Sublime and Beautiful; not by containing a large portion of the qualities, but by reconciling the former, instanced in *action*, more uninterruptedly with *fitness* than it has yet been; and so drawing, as it were, the two last together till they met. I thus sought to give an example of what was new, while it deviated from no rule, and what, if it did not, as I hoped, and am still convinced it may, suggest hints to improve composition, would at least set people on thinking, as it might then make Burke's philosophy the object of their thoughts. I mention in

this work the connection my dialogues will have with his philosophy; and as poetry and fiction will there be founded on it, so will, as a part of them, the drama, and that precisely according to the idea of Hurd, than whom I agree with Gibbon in thinking none more worthy of the name of a critic. That I do not strain a point to prove the consistency arising from sound principles, in shewing the philosopher and the critic agreeing, will be plain to any one who recollects that they thought alike, and both differently from Hume, of the effects of tragedy. I shall at the same time explain my opinions on this subject, as I conceive they have been misapprehended.

The same, or another Reviewer has, in the effervescence of *genius*, overlooked "the subject, scope in every page" of another of my works. It would be natural for one which is a very long imitation replete with parallelisms, and also a critical work, comprehending every topic in poetry, to obtain notice, either as being of the one sort, or of the other. But I will grant, for argument's sake, that only the composition was to have been thought of, in my "Art of English Poetry." Now what did the critic find fault with in it? Why that it was "tame;" and thus the distinction Horace made more than one effort to establish between the ode and the epistle, was to be destroyed, by requiring *wildness* equally in both styles. Nay, this was not enough; for, in

the Epistle to the Piso's, the gravity of the didactic style is superadded to the plainness of the epistle; and therefore we should rather have supposed nothing but that ambiguous philanthropic taste, which has no zeal for any thing but proselytism, would league the tyger and the lamb, by countenancing, in an imitation of it, any affectation of the enthusiasm of the ode.

Before I conclude this critical note, it will be to the purpose to infer from several parts of this work, the temporary but essential advantage sometimes obtained by controvertists, from misunderstanding their opponents. As long as they form and express judgments on any point, they are liable to be answered, and they cannot be secure of that *last word*, which is full as precious in disputes, to single, as it is said to be to married, individuals. But if there is a question, of which, from its novelty, the public are not yet masters, it may be worth while for critics (and it will be so natural as hardly to shew design) to check inquiry by a flourishing decision propped by popular arguments, in which prejudice or pedantry conceal ignorance. They may criticize as Voltaire did Montesquieu, who complained that he made the book, and then judged it;* or else, preserve a contemptuous and consequential silence, only broken by occasional sneers, which is at least equally in the spirit of censure, as well as productive of it. Il fait son livre, et puis il le critique.

of its unjust and prejudicial consequences. For the *attentive* censure of the first review of Burke could not be complained of.

NOTE V.

Faultiness is deficiency; see Johnson's Dictionary. This therefore is the opposite to fitness, not to beauty, which Burke has proved quite a distinct quality. Gibbon, of course, expresses himself wrongly in this passage: "The division however of the passive impression which is common to all men, and relates chiefly to positive *beauty or faultiness*, and the active judgment which is founded on knowledge, and exercised mostly on comparison, pleased me." There is more inaccuracy in it. If it can be said that the judgment founded on knowledge, when become ready by exercise, is less passive than the power of perception he speaks of, yet still sensibility is not, as he supposes, any more *common to all men*, than judgment. They are both possessed by all, and sometimes one, and sometimes the other predominates. That I may conclude the criticisms on this eminent writer, by which I am endeavouring to throw light upon the subject, I shall remark, first, on the too low character of the inimitable introduction on taste; which is done justice to by Mr. George Mason, the author of an Essay on Gardening, marked with taste and judgment; though he

does not equally approve of Burke's definitions of beauty. It is however natural and proper to attend particularly to the predicates of such subjects as we would distinguish; and this is all that is done by Burke; every part of whose book is intimately connected with the rest. Gibbon supposes him led by system to deny that the removal of pain can produce pleasure, and the removal of pleasure, pain; but he might in many instances have been understood, where he was misapprehended, by a sufficient care

To catch the fleeting Cinthia of the minute,

or a proper notice of that moment, in which the mind is sent off from the idea of sense, among its innumerable associations, which can immediately change the character of its objects. Of the beautiful in taste, surely Burke has spoken intelligibly in several parts of his work. Favouring the opinion, "of the ideas of beauty being founded on those of order, proportion, or utility," Gibbon asserts, that "in speaking of any thing beautiful, we consider the figure as so essential to it, as not to be altered without changing the nature of it; and the colour as an accessory quality, which may be varied at pleasure." Yet would the reader continue to admire the most beautiful woman in Christendom, were she to turn blue or green? It is the majority of ideas suggested by figure, that makes colour ever seem less essential in any thing

beautiful ; yet variety may exist in colour, and simplicity and plainness in figure. I am far from attempting to depreciate one of the principal writers of his day. I would not have any thing more inferred from my observations, than that in the single line of philosophy, he was not so infallible, that we should do wisely in changing our religion, or way of thinking, in any respect suddenly, to adopt opinions he, in reasoning abstractedly, would recommend. That his powers were great, I allow, though not that they were all equally great. He was far from a mean critic ; nor was he so insensible to the distinctions of things, as to approve of that disgusting olio of German and modern French taste and morals, which would sacrifice propriety in composition to the

———— mere shews of seeming pure,
And banish from man's life
Simplicity and spotless innocence.

He was still more remarkable for the union of genius and various knowledge displayed in his history, whatever fault is justly found with its style in some respects. As a man of the world too, and as particularly versed in history, he had an advantage in forming political opinions.

From the consideration of *ugliness*, which is the object of this note, we may infer that fitness cannot be the same as beauty ; since, as things modified so

as to be ugly must always exist, it is revolting against the decrees of Providence to maintain, that they must be unfit; which would be the consequence of this doctrine. We are apt to say that things go *wrong*, and that they ought to be *rectified*; but this is speaking metaphorically. The fact is only that they are *unpleasant*, and ought to be *meliorated*, unless it is by the neglect of the members of any society, that they were permitted to remain as we do not wish them. There may exist defect and deformity, which we simply like, dislike, or contemn, which we admire or shudder at, and which we are indifferent about. But let us observe the gradations according to which the mind is affected. Burke thinks it useless to take any account of ideas which are perceived without any kind of interest. When we are attracted by things, merely as such, it is curiosity that operates; and it is the gratification of this, in running over the ideas we compare, as well as of conscious pride, in the manner he explains to us, which forms the pleasure we derive from fitness; and this is a pleasure natural to the arithmetician. But may he not perceive beauty, it may be said, in the subject of his studies? He may, to a certain degree; for the comparative ease with which his ideas will pass through a sum remarkable for neatness and simplicity, will be an indulgence, and quite the opposite to that perplexity, which Hartley attributes to *deformity*, but which is more properly referred

to *ugliness*, as it does not transgress any law, but only thwarts the will. Yet no direct pleasure can result from what is fit, independent of associations. A still more powerful effect on the mind than what is produced by novelty, is this of beauty, which acts not only on the understanding, but the passions. It has a natural degree of stimulus, for which we are constantly looking out, and therefore what it produces is more properly called pleasure. Sublimity, on the other hand, rouses the passions strongly by a sort of agreeable violence.

All our passions, as Dr. Priestley observes, in his Preface to Hartley, are reducible to *fear* and *love*. Now these are the passions on which Burke founds the sublime and beautiful; and whenever our sensations are most exquisite, it is through them. In another work he differs more from him, speaking of the pathetic and sublime as the great effects of composition, and ranking together, as inferior, what pleases and diverts. I should, I own, place the beautiful, or that which pleases, very near the sublime, as well as rank them together, according to custom. The parts of Milton, as well as other poets, which have been most generally admired, whether properly or not, have perhaps been the beautiful ones; and admonish us to preserve a philosophical impartiality towards different styles of writing. Burke too considers the pathetic as a species of the beautiful. Sympathy, according to him,

may in tragedy either turn upon ideas of pain or pleasure. In the first of these cases we shall be alarmed for the safety of a person represented in danger; and in the second, we shall either rejoice with any one, or dwell upon the ideas of his lost happiness, equally with a *yearning* towards the object of our thoughts; while terror, on the contrary, rouses the whole man to counteract it. It is true, the pathetic may "shake;" and it will do so by an admission of the sublime; for here, as in other instances, what Burke says in a different part, will hold true, that the sublime and beautiful may even wholly blend and unite. The joint effect too of the operating causes may be of the greatest strength, though each cause will not be so important as if the whole effect were produced by it. But as long as the idea of pleasure is uppermost, no *agitation* renders the sublime predominant.

— It has been seen, however, though fitness is not synonymous with beauty, that it is a quality of the highest value in the fine arts. I will add another instance or two, of which a striking one is furnished by architecture. In this art particularly it is proved, how much a knowledge of the relations of things is necessary to excel in the display of fancy; since without a great deal of the knowledge of rules, and minute observation of the architect, it is impossible to satisfy a man of taste; though there is no

art more calculated than this, even considered as unconnected with grounds, to employ a genius for the sublime and beautiful. Accordingly, the gentleman who has what we call a natural taste, and who has not seen many different specimens of the art, never perhaps so much or so easily both appears out of character, and ensures to himself future repentance of a similar kind, as in endeavours to produce the effects of it, without the help of an architect. On the other hand, an architect without taste will mislead him, unless he himself supplies it by continual hints, in return for the information he receives; but they may thus generally act together for the advantage of their country. For it must surely increase the sum of happiness, to have every form round us exactly such as nature has endued with properties to communicate pleasure or delight. It may be owing, perhaps, much to the proud, yet mean, amusement we find in censure, that we continue to tolerate *nonsense* before us on the stage, and on each side of us in the streets.

When two arts are closely allied, there is often a characteristic fitness that should be carefully superadded in one, to what is sufficient for the other. There are circumstances which the landscape-painter must take into consideration, with which the landscape-gardener need not trouble himself. There are also those which the dramatic poet must attend

to, and which are not the business of the *maitre de ballet*. These I am more desirous of noticing, at the present time, as Diderot, whose criticisms encourage that *unnatural imitation of nature* so much in vogue, has talked particularly about picturesque situations; though many examples he has furnished us in his comedies, are such that, I must own, it is a painful effort to me to keep up attention to them, instead of finding them, as they endeavour to be, peculiarly attractive. For it appears to me that in every scene, the language should carry us on of itself for some time, and that the scenery and grouping should then take us up where they left us, but be, in their turn, relieved; so borrowing and lending assistance to impress the mind with adequate effect, and spare pains to the reader. At least, till of late years, fine scenes have been of this description. I wonder therefore at the high praise more than once lavished on one in the translation of the Robbers, as a great beauty, or the masterpiece, of a popular author; and since I am writing upon a subject of taste, I shall with no treacherous silence forbear to indicate my dissent from the opinion that has been entertained of it. It is said by one of the approving critics, "There cannot be a nobler subject for a picture than the preceding scene. The figure of Moor agitated by remorse, yet characterized by a wild and terrible grandeur, surrounded by a set of banditti—The pencil of Salvator Rosa could alone do justice to the conception

of the poet."* But very little of this picture would depend upon the mere powers of the poet, or any he does not share with the painter; for there is a want of force and variety in the *principal* ideas expressed by words, which will be better seen on comparing this quotation with the subsequent one from Ossian. But the remorse seems not of that theatrical intenseness, which produces the strong and clear workings of the mind, that affect us, for instance, in the characters of Macbeth, or Cardinal Beaufort. It is a remorse for impropriety, or *general* deviation from the path of virtue; and it is only by the scholars of Diderot that so great a stress has been laid upon the *beauty of virtue*. This species of remorse therefore is not formed to strike by itself, or by means of the *action*; but it may be grafted on the *manners*, and, with care, might be made pleasingly characteristic of a man of worth; yet I cannot applaud the art of the poet in this instance. In the same way the beauty of virtue too much obtrudes itself in Pizarro, as where he is spared in his sleep by Rolla; though such actions put into full view by ingenious management, might have well exemplified the superiority sought to be shewn of the Peruvians over the Spaniards, by turning our attention to the ease and truth of nature in the

* Drake's Literary Hours, Vol. II. p. 55. Other critical remarks which have lately appeared, will be taken notice of, at a future opportunity.

innocent manners pourtrayed, where such actions proceeded from them.

What introduces the reflections of this scene is an allusion to the sun, which brings into the mind of Moor a wish he formed when a boy, similar I will observe to Gray's, (in writing poetry, however,) towards the close of his Sapphic ode,

"O ego felix, vice si, (nec unquam surgerem rursus)."

Whether this boy, dealing in tropes and similes, is the boy of Horace and of nature, who enters into composition to give it force, or whether he would seem *particular* to his playmates, it is for the critic to determine. Young Alexander wept lest he should fail to resemble, not a sun, but a conqueror. The critic too will judge how far the recollection of that boyish conversation, without any introductory truth of character or *naïveté*, is natural and dignified enough for the principal hero in a tragedy; or how far, upon the whole, the simple effect of the situation is heightened by any artful dramatic touches. For the reasons I have given, I own I cannot suppose this scene quite the masterpiece of a favourite tragic author.

I ought not either to forbear to re-inforce, by one or two more general remarks, my different arguments against a rage for the beauty of virtue in composition. Formerly, particular phrases and sentences in dramatic authors were considered as beauties. Not only the "qu'il mourut" of Corneille,

and the "en roi" of Racine, which marked character, were thought deserving of notice, but the eloquent moral and political maxims of Corneille were admired in themselves, and only wished to be so rarely interspersed, as perhaps to heighten the distress, by distinguishing, like the others, either the manners of men or countries. At present the prejudice, rightly indeed taken up, in favour of the abstract idea of passion in tragedy, has become of no service from inattention to nature; and the moral theories of this century having their full influence on the writer's mind, he has been led also, while declaiming against the sentiments of Corneille, to revive their character in less congenial examples; not in an easy and almost natural flow of dialogue, but in unprepared, though (to the disgrace of our audiences) wonder-working actions of foppish morality. Thus in attempting to assimilate more with Shakspeare, we become more unlike him; since the fact is (and it should be kept constantly in mind) that in an endeavour to resemble a writer at once irregular and natural, it is possible to deceive the public and ourselves into an opinion of our success, by shewing a possession of one of the qualities, though perfectly destitute of the other. I may very likely err in a preference of nature to philanthropy in poetical composition; and I certainly am far from too solicitous to recommend it; but since, much as I value ancient taste, I have a still greater regard for truth, it was my earnest wish to

turn the attention of those who lead the public taste, to the difference between the real and supposed style of Shakspeare.

Finally, I shall make two other general observations; and first, with regard to any evil tendency that may be attributed to the view of nature exhibited, as we have seen it, by Burke's philosophy, I shall venture to suppose it granted, that an equal respect to opposite principles of opinion and action, has proved it as absurd to expect too much as too little liberty from any hint it might afford, either in taste or morals. It is alike favourable to the man of the world and the man of books; to the poet and the critic: only it would shew that morals ought to be committed to the care of judgment, and criticism of taste. In rightly using it, allowance will always be made for the weaknesses of human nature, and yet vice will not be countenanced by the juvenile admission of any maxim that justifies it. That love of simplification which is natural to the student, will be encouraged to set the mind on thinking, though not the tongue on talking; but the smallest encroachment he meditates upon institutions will be resolutely opposed, and even every compromise with him at first esteemed suspicious. And in judging of works of fancy, an equal stress will be laid on every part of this "logic of taste," the valuable treasure delivered into our hands by the philosopher. In short, our opinions may be opposed and altered

by it, yet only through our own acquisition of knowledge, and investigation of principles.

Secondly, I will just intimate, how far an accusation of too much *confidence*, for any earnestness of manner I may have shewn in treating my subject, deserves respect. In these times, a certain degree of resolution in forbearing for a moment to weaken our cause from the love of popularity, or fear of injustice, is surely more than ever commendable; nor is it any reason why we should consider it superfluous, that, however natural it may be to set a high value on our exertions, we have judged it our duty to rate ourselves as low as the general opinion has placed us. I am, both in a plain and figurative sense, a private soldier, armed for the defence of my religion and country; but I shall continue just to preserve that confidence which is, in spite of the arguments of treasonable emissaries, becoming in a private soldier. If, accordingly, I find a less judicious conduct observed by my superiors of one sort than what is exhibited to me by those of the other, I shall withhold my obedience as long as I have the least excuse for it. Should, for instance, a petty *literary* officer, in the heat of action, when every man is trusting to his own strength or slight, order me to fall into the ranks to join in some complicated manœuvre; or should he, when the enemy is charging according to the new tactics, prepare to drill me and my neighbours, in observing all the

old military forms, I at least shall look out keenly for a counter-order from one of greater authority. Nor shall I certainly more scruple to persevere, though accused by the enemy himself of a violation of the laws of war, in taking advantages which are among the most justifiable he takes. But I trust the cause of religion, for which we *fight*, will be supported by rather more than less of prudent *liberality*, in addition to that honesty which, in general, is so remarkable in its adherents; and that its popularity becoming every day greater, its friends may be too much animated by success, to mortify ingenuous zeal among themselves by the cavils of cold bigotry and frivolous squeamishness, while its enemies, for the same reason, together with the pride of citizenship, may abate of that superabundant censure, which, dealt forth in blasphemous ribaldry, has, to this hour, new strung the lawless arms it guides against all the pious and the well meaning.

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OF THE

TIMELY APPEAL.*

REASONS for one, not a public man, and who has given his mind to other studies as much as politics, to make known his opinion of the affairs of the nation; shewing them a subject that comes home to men's bosoms, especially at the present time. page 5.

These reasons actuate the author; and he therefore enumerates the most prevailing political topics, resulting from popular discontent; and as those which betrayed most enthusiasm, were least durable among the many, they are mentioned first, and the order of time thus observed. p. 7.

I. *The restraints of religion and morality.*] These are considered as rational in all their strictness, being consistent with the views of genuine philosophy. The means of forwarding them; first, by entrusting the task to prudence, and a knowledge of men:

* This work being, in fact, throughout a mere analysis, it was too much considered as such, and more care taken to collect together facts, and observations on them, than to arrange and explain them. This has made the present Table of Contents the more necessary. Should this work ever reach a second edition, a few corrections may free it from the principal objections.

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 Also, thirdly, by defending decency of conduct united with directness, from the charge of hypocrisy, brought forward by bigotry and prejudice. p. 10.
2. *The unequal distribution of wealth.*] Having property in common unnatural, instead of natural : p. 16.—The statesman has a sublime object, much superior to merely enriching individuals. And in increasing the wealth of his country, he should be considered as merely following nature, who is conducting him to some unknown good by the only paths she opens to him : p. 17.—The envy of wealth considered as senseless and absurd, as it is injurious. p. 19.
3. *Inequality of rank.*] Men have equal rights, but are not born equal ; laws and institutions being formed to remedy, as far as possible, their natural inequality. There may also be given too much, as well as too little power to rulers ; but we are sometimes apt to think that too much, which increases real liberty. p. 20.
4. *The severity of our penal code :* p. 22.] The best way of endeavouring to increase lenity, to put in full view circumstantial evidence, in order to be warned against it often by our laudable regard for demonstrative certainty : p. 23.—Yet the lenity of modern philosophers would make men appear too much machines ; and therefore as teaching men to respect themselves, forms a ready, mild, and additional incentive to virtue, and as a want of humility is not shewn by the bare avowal of a distinction between men and brutes ; it is recommended for legislators to appeal full as often to conscience and religion, as to punishment : p. 25.—Consistent with this idea is that

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of inviting by rewards, as well as deterring by punishments ; which deserves particular notice, as recently countenanced by the Society for bettering the Condition of the Poor : p. 26.—The distinctions given birth to by this plan, might extend to all orders in the community, by adopting praise instead of censure ; and proportionably inform the minds of men on morals and the merit of services towards it : p. 27.—To do this, virtue should be carefully distinguished from its accompaniments. The character of the honest man recommended to present favour, in order to get rid of prejudice in favour of such accompaniments, for the end of justice : p. 29.—At any rate encouragement should always be *ceteris paribus*, in proportion to virtue : just as there is no reason to reject any degree of *fitness* in the drama, which does not deduct from its *sublimity and beauty* : p. 34.—Praise, however, often more a discouragement than an encouragement : p. 38.—Yet true substantial encouragement not always in men's power : p. 39.—The scale of justice defended from the imputation of selfishness : p. 40.—Or unchristian principle : p. 43.—A recapitulation of this whole part, including the author's opinion. The honest man judged always to possess a full half of the qualities on which to found love and esteem, and yet the possessors of splendid ones rightly to press often before him on other principles. The exclusive countenance of activity, on the contrary, by the precipitate theorist, always defeats its own end. p. 48.

5. *Disregard of the good will expressed for us by the French.*] The changeableness of the relative situation of two countries, especially such as have been rivals, proper to check an enthusiastic attachment to any. p. 50.

6. *Religious establishments.*] Different arguments in favour of them; one allowing, but only for the sake of argument, the high value of abstract fitness in the formation of governments. p. 51.
7. *Partial representation.*] The impropriety of this complaint put into full view by putting the strongest case as an example. p. 56.
8. *The imperfect diffusion of knowledge.*] The inconsistency of lovers of science in maintaining this; for, first, the encouragement of discussion, and what is called free inquiry, among the educated, by favouring false, obstructs true philosophy: p. 60.—And, secondly, laying a stress on the learning of the uneducated, tends to check energy in their particular pursuits, and is adverse to the spirit of a principle, now in general esteem; namely, the division of labour. p. 62.
9. *Indisposition to peace.*] The war-system inconsistently declaimed against: p. 66.—Also imprudently, as being necessary, among other reasons, from motives of piety, which make a difference between confidence in foreign powers, and in the Deity: p. 67.—The same distrust of human light may tolerate both monarchy and republicanism: p. 69.—Some solidity in governments absolutely necessary to preserve this balance, otherwise all is left to chance, and we cannot see our way clear: p. 75.—Another advantage, in the same view, to be derived from extended population, over the civilized world, from the greater probability of finding powerful states to preserve national liberty: p. 77.—The necessity of a spirit, like Hannibal's, to support the same cause, recommended by the consequence of a deficiency of it in Pompey, as described in Lucan: p. 79.—The perfect contrast between

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- liberty, as it has appeared to ancient patriots, and modern revolutionists.—The press recommended as the means of encouraging henceforward a good disposition among the lower orders: p. 86.—And similar exertions, as properly continued, in spite of our triumphant resistance, and of the scruples entertained by religionists: p. 87.—Finally, Greece and Rome not considered, as they are by theoretical politicians, unworthy of furnishing examples to our youth, yet neither as they are by the unenlightened lover of antiquity, teeming with glorious precedents of the sacrifice of general to particular liberty; but quite the contrary: p. 88.—Jacobinism the bitterest enemy to real liberty of all kinds that ever has existed. p. 89.
10. *The weight of taxes.*] A single general remark made on this topic, as it does not strongly suggest any corresponding one in morals. p. 89.
11. *The discouragements of agriculture.*] This slightly mentioned, for a like reason. p. 90.
12. *Restrictions of trade.*] On this too, as less connected with the moral theories of the times, only enough is said to enable us to form a conclusion. *ib.*
13. *The distresses of the poor.*] Though these are a most frequent subject of more than moral lamentation; a few remarks are only made upon them here, as much has been said of the poor in a former part of the work; and the mention there of a Society well known by its beneficial labours, will have suggested that little more need be said. p. 91.
14. *Ministerial influence.*] Shewn to be in effect justified by politicians of opposite principles; and defensible in spite of every just concession; which is made, in order to adhere to the method observed throughout,

and rest upon liberal arguments; they being the strongest, as they confute false reasoners, even upon their own principles. p. 92.

15. *An enlightened attachment to antiquity.*] Arises from two sources, a more and a less important one—the conviction of judgment, and the prejudice of fancy; a prejudice only despised by frigid dulness: p. 99—

Necessary however to be led in all cases only by that which is derived from the most important one; and that yields, as far as consistent with honour and good faith, to circumstances, both in settling our own government, and in allowing the principles of others: p. 101.—

Those who dislike the spirit of system, provide for order and liberty both more consistently and judiciously by adhering to old institutions, only varied constitutionally by a wise minister, and allowing rational philosophic doubt; than by depending upon the restraints of fanciful theories, and favouring a general relaxation of laws: p. 103.—Burke's idea

justified, that the world may grow older and yet become less enlightened, by recommending a material consideration to notice, which even the history of criticism shews conceivable; namely, the possibility there is, that soundness of general judgment, at a particular time, may depend upon the superior minds; and wholesome influence of extraordinary persons, at whose death ignorance again holds the ladder to ambition: p. 104.—

The encouragement of science referred to, as belonging to the present subject, though its unfavourable side is shewn already; the ardent cultivation of it defended from the objections of religionists; as a love of justice and approbation of necessary war had been before: p. 106.—An opportunity

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rather sought than otherwise here, as at the beginning of the work, to acknowledge every inferiority that is real; and the more as it is contrary to the spirit of the times; yet what is unpossessed no indispensable qualification for the present Appeal; and therefore sentiments hazarded proper to encourage Englishmen: p. 115.—Finally, the author's prayer for a blessing on the endeavours of Christian philosophy.

p. 119.

ERRATA.

Page 1, line 2, *for* "and politics," *read* "and that of politics."
— 48, — 24, *for* "no less," *read* "less."

rather than of the world, as at the beginning of the world, to acknowledge every nation that is real; and the more as it is contrary to the spirit of the time, what is supposed to be indispensable qualification for the present Age; and therefore, rather than to encourage proper to encourage English, in the present Age. Finally, the author's prayer for a blessing on the endeavors of Christian philosophy.

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Page 1. line 1. for "and" read "and"

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